



EDCE SACERDOS MAGNUS.

L I V E S

OF

T H E E N G L I S H S A I N T S.

St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York.

MANSUETI HÆREDITABUNT TERRAM, ET DELECTABUNTUR IN
MULTITUDINE PACIS.

L O N D O N :

JAMES TOOVEY, 192, PICCADILLY.

1844.

LONDON :

Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

THE LIFE OF

St. Wilfrid,

BISHOP OF YORK. A.D. 709.

To be striving to do good and to follow conscience, to be secretly sure that, with many miserable failures, we are doing God's work, and yet the while to be misunderstood, cruelly misinterpreted by persons whom we not only acknowledge to be good but indeed far better than ourselves—this is a cross which Saints have sometimes had to bear. It was St. Wilfrid's cross, and very heavily it pressed upon him. When St. Bernard persecuted St. William of York, the archbishop doubtless suffered greatly; yet he was no Saint then, and he could not have had that high clear consciousness that he was suffering for the cause of Christ and His Church, which St. Wilfrid might have. But it may be that St. William often pondered the story of his great predecessor, in many respects not unlike his own. This then forms part of the interest of St. Wilfrid's life to a reader, while it gives no little pain and perplexity to the writer. Here is a Saint misunderstood by Saints, persecuted by Saints, deposed by Saints as unworthy of the pontificate: truly a very fertile theme for the shallow criticisms of the children of the world: while to a Christian its lesson is that earth is not our home, that the balance of things is not righted till the Judgment, the oppressive mystery of the world not unriddled, the

Church Militant not the Church Triumphant : a simple thing to say, yet involving more than most people put into the consideration.

Then another thing which makes St. Wilfrid's life interesting is its being, so to speak (for the language is hardly too strong), a new beginning for the Saxon Church, a new mission from Rome. Not only were the northern shires *almost* in overt schism about the Scottish usages, not only had rough-handed kings begun to tyrannize over the Church and even interfere in episcopal elections, but we are told that, after the death of St. Deusdedit, Wine the bishop of the West Saxons was the only canonically consecrated bishop in England, and he too afterwards guilty of fearful simony, and Wilfrid felt himself compelled to go to the Gallican bishops for consecration ; and the course of the narrative will bring before us some lamentable instances of erastian submission, and even of disgraceful misrule in ecclesiastical synods. But Rome carried the day in the person of St. Wilfrid. They wore him out with strife, calumny, and persecution ; but his patience was indomitable, his energy unsleeping, and he finished his work, though he died in finishing it. Such was St. Wilfrid's office ; let us see how he fulfilled it.

Of Wilfrid's parents nothing more is known than that they were noble. None of his three biographers mention his father's name or the place of his birth. The date seems to have been somewhere about 634, if that is not putting it too late. His birth was marked by a singular prodigy, which attracted people's attention to him, and made them divine what manner of child he was to be. At the moment of his birth a heavenly light enveloped the house, so that, to those without, it appeared as though it were in flames. His mother

died while he was yet a child, and Fredegod relates that the fury of a step-mother rendered his home anything but peaceful ; and in his thirteenth year, the boyish noble, already shewing his ardent and fearless spirit, demanded of his father horses and armour and a retinue, and in this guise, as if he were playing at chivalry, young Wilfrid received the paternal blessing, turned his back upon his home, and proceeded in gay martial trappings to the court of King Oswy. He met with a kind or rather good-natured reception, and was soon wisely provided for by Queen Eanflede. It chanced that there was then at court an old noble named Cudda, whom a long palsy had weaned from the vanities of the world, and who was anxious to become a monk at Lindisfarne. To his care the queen commended young Wilfrid. Anything that was a change seems to have suited the boy equally well. Perhaps he was tired of his armour and retinue. However, he asked his father's leave to go to Lindisfarne, to which his father willingly consented, deeming such a wish in one so young to be probably an inspiration of Heaven. He resided some years among the monks, diligently pursuing his studies, and which is of far more importance, daily growing in chastity and other graces. His powers of mind were very great indeed ; the psalter was quickly learned, and he made himself master of such other books as fell in his way. But he was so far from conceit or forwardness or thirst for praise that his obedience edified the whole community, and his humility was so lovely as to gain for him the affections of old and young. But, as St. Bede says, he was a clear-sighted youth, and that means a great deal in the mouth of the venerable historian.

In truth, amid the monks of Lindisfarne, in the very stronghold of Scottish usages, Wilfrid made a discovery,

and that discovery gave the colour to his whole life. Whether he had fallen upon some old books, or from whatever cause, he began to suspect that there was a more perfect way of serving God ; that there were ancient traditions of Catholic customs which it was most dangerous to slight, and yet which were utterly neglected. When once he had got this into his mind, he seized upon it and followed it out in that prescient way in which men who have a work to do are gifted to detect and pursue their master idea, without wasting themselves on collateral objects. Wilfrid pondered and pondered this discovery in his solitude, and he saw that the one thing to do was to go to Rome, and learn under the shadow of St. Peter's chair the more perfect way. To look Romeward is a Catholic instinct, seemingly implanted in us for the safety of the faith. Wilfrid does not appear to have made any secret of his difficulties, neither do the good monks seem to have been quite satisfied themselves that all was right. He acquainted them with his purpose of going to Rome to see what rites were followed by the churches and monasteries close to the Apostolic See. They not only approved his design, but exhorted him at once to put it into execution.

Wilfrid, leaving Lindisfarne, went to take counsel of his patroness Queen Eanflede, St. Edwin's daughter, whose baptism was such an interesting event in the history of the Northumbrian Church. The queen highly commended Wilfrid's intentions, and despatched him to Kent to King Erconbert, who was her relation, desiring him to send the youth to Rome. The Church of Canterbury was at that time governed by St. Honorius, a man who is described as being peculiarly well skilled in ecclesiastical matters. Here then was another field for the keen-eyed Wilfrid. But it was short

of Rome. The process may be longer or shorter, but Catholics get to Rome at last, in spite of wind and tide. What he saw in Kent would only make him thirst more to approach as an ardent pilgrim the veritable metropolis of the Church, to pray at the tombs of the Apostles, and reverence the throne in the Lateran Cathedral, and honour the relics in the basilica of Holy Cross. Everybody who came across Wilfrid seems to have been struck with him, and not only so, but to have loved him also. King Erconbert probably had not as yet forwarded many pilgrims from the northern shires to Rome ; it was a road untrodden by the English youth, says Eddi Stephani,—untrodden as yet ; so that Wilfrid was singular in looking on such a pilgrimage as meritorious, and hoping to win pardon for the sins and ignorances of his youth in such a holy vicinity as the threshold of the Apostles. However this fresh, quick youth from the north seems to have astonished the Kentish king not a little. Prayer, fast, vigil and reading, made up the life of his young guest, so that Erconbert “loved him marvellously.” Indeed Wilfrid must have had a versatile mind, and certainly hesitated at nothing which enabled him to realize to himself communion with Rome. This strong feeling seems to be the key to almost everything he did. At Lindisfarne he had learned the psalter : but it was St. Jerome’s improved version, generally used by the Gallican and German Churches of that day. At Canterbury he found the old version in use, as it stood before St. Jerome took the matter in hand. In fact it was used at Rome in preference to St. Jerome’s version ; this was enough for Wilfrid. He made all the haste he could to forget St. Jerome’s version, and learn the old one. What a task it must have been ! Learning the psalter by heart

is plain work, even if it take some time and no little diligence ; but to go on saying the hours for years, wearing the very inflexions of St. Jerome's version into his heart, and then to lay it aside, and learn a new version, and steer clear of his old remembrances during recitation,—this must have been an irksome task, and one which many would never have compassed at all. But it was a labor of love : it brought Wilfrid more into contact with Roman things. This was the Roman feeling in a little matter ; but it was the same feeling, and no other, which was the life of his actions afterwards.

Erconbert detained the reluctant pilgrim for four long years in the Kentish court, and Wilfrid began to languish with the sickness of hope deferred. Meanwhile there arrived another young noble on his way to Rome. This was no other than Benedict Biscop. The king could now hardly defer his consent to Wilfrid's departure, and is said to have told St. Benedict to take him to Rome. From this it would appear that St. Benedict was the elder of the two : now we know he was only five and twenty when he made his first journey to Rome, so that Wilfrid must have been very young indeed when he left Lindisfarne, as he had resided four years with Erconbert. Wilfrid and St. Benedict travelled together as far as Lyons ; and here begins another characteristic of St. Wilfrid's life. He and St. Benedict disagreed, and parted at Lyons. That there was nothing eccentric in Wilfrid's temper, no untoward projections in his character, one may infer from the love with which he seems to have inspired people generally. Yet there must have been something about him not easily come at, not readily understood or sympathized with, which must account for much that happened to him. That there was a quarrel seems

clear from the somewhat ambiguous language of Eddi Stephani. “Affable to all, penetrating in mind, strong in body, *a quick walker*,¹ expert at all good works, *he never had a sour face*; but with alacrity and joy he travelled on to the city of Lyons; there he abode some time with his companions, his austere-minded leader departing from him, as Barnabas did from Paul because of John who was surnamed Mark.” What this exactly means, whether there was any John Mark, *i. e.* any bone of contention, in the case, or whether, as is usual with the writers of those ages, whose style is tesselated all over with scripture vocabulary and allusions, the quarrel between two good men simply brought St. Paul and St. Barnabas to mind in the way of an analogy,—we confess we do not know. It is plain, however, that Wilfrid and Benedict separated at Lyons in some unpleasant way: and it may be that the objects of the two were not alike. St. Benedict seems to have wished to visit Rome, and did not want to linger by the way; while one of Wilfrid’s professed objects was to visit and examine the chief monasteries on the road and study their discipline, an object which, later in life, became paramount with St. Benedict himself.

If the date of St. Benedict’s first visit to Rome be correctly fixed to the year 653, then 634 obviously cannot be the date of Wilfrid’s birth; for he was fourteen when he went to Lindisfarne, and he stayed four years in Kent: this would only leave him a year at Lindisfarne, whereas Bede distinctly says that he served God *some years* in that holy house. The chronology of St. Wilfrid’s life is altogether very difficult to fix; and it is not at all pretended that the dates given here are really the true ones; an attempt has been made to ascer-

¹ Allegorically, he was a quick walker his whole life through.

tain the truth, but without any such special research as would have been beside the practical end for which the life was written.

St. Delphinus was archbishop of Lyons at the time when Wilfrid visited that city, and he would of course be provided with commendatory letters from St. Honorius to all the prelates whose dioceses lay in his road to Rome. The young pilgrim seems to have made the same favorable impression on the archbishop that he had done on so many others, and it is particularly mentioned that his bright face recommended him especially to Delphinus as betokening an inward purity and calmness. In a short time he became so much attached to Wilfrid that he proposed to adopt him, promised to give him his niece in marriage, and to obtain for him an important government in Gaul. "If you consent to this," said the archbishop, "you will find me ready to help you in all things just as a father." But much as the archbishop loved Wilfrid, he had not fathomed him; Saint and martyr though he was, he did not see the tokens of Wilfrid's real character, his love of God, his burning zeal for the Church, his invincible singleness of purpose; else would he never have tempted him with the world. He imagined his guest to be a young Saxon noble, full of chivalry and devotion, high purposes and virginal purity. But Wilfrid comprehended that he was called to higher things than honorable wedlock and dignified magistracy, room though there was in these things to serve God and His Church. He refused the archbishop's kind offers. "I have vows," said he, "which I must pay to the Lord; I have left, like Abraham, my kindred and my father's house to visit the Apostolic See, and learn the rules of ecclesiastical discipline that my country may make proof of them in God's

service ; and I would fain receive from God what He has promised to them that love him, an hundredfold now, and then eternal life, for leaving father and mother, houses and lands. If it please God, I will see your face again on my return.” The archbishop was of course too holy a man not to delight still more in Wilfrid, seeing in him such manifest proofs of a heavenly vocation. He detained him on the whole about a year at Lyons, and doubtless gave him much valuable instruction in the customs of the Church. Lyons and the banks of the Rhone are not without Christian antiquities and associations of a sort to make a deep impression on Wilfrid ; and it would not escape him that Easter was celebrated after the Roman computation in the city of St. Irenæus, notwithstanding the vain plea of the Scots that they stood upon the tradition of St. John. At the beginning of the following year St. Delphinus allowed his guest to depart for Rome. The good archbishop had promised to be a father to Wilfrid, if he would accept his offers of worldly happiness and rank ; would not the holy martyr feel still more a father’s yearning heart to that heroic youth who with such gentle consistency put the bright things of the world aside, and went on his way hopefully and bravely ?

As at Canterbury and Lyons, so at Rome Wilfrid distinguished himself by his genius for making friends. The archdeacon Boniface, who was secretary to St. Martin the pope,² attached himself particularly to the young Englishman, and took as much delight in teaching him as if he had been his own son. Truly Rome was always a kind-hearted city ; the very hearth and home of catholic hospitality ; even in these days, if considerate kindness could do so at *Rome*, the very aliens

² Mabillon asks—“An Eugenii ejus successoris?”

are made to forget that they are aliens, and dream for that little while that they are sons. Is this craftiness ? Yes ; goodness was ever crafty, ever had a wily way of alluring what came near it. How happy Wilfrid must have been at Rome ! We are told that he spent entire months in going from one holy place to another, not to see only, but to pray and perfect himself in the exercises of a spiritual life. His lot in Rome was the same which befalls most travellers who go there for religious ends and spend their time in a religious way. Will it be thought superstitious to say that to such persons it almost invariably happens that there is something or other of a mysterious kind in the occurrences which befall them there, something new, strange, unaccountable, provided only they are searching after heavenly things ? As if that city were instinct with a sort of preternatural energy, and that virtue went from it, either to heal or hurt, according to the faith of him who touched, we read that Rome made Petrarch almost an infidel ; and Luther, to say the best, had his infidelity corroborated by his visit to the catholic capital, because of the sins, the pride, luxury, and corruption there.

Mysterious Rome ! thy very ills are fraught
With somewhat of thy fearful destiny,
So that the vision of thy sins hath wrought
Even like a curse within the passer-by.
Here gazed of old with no religious eye
Petrarch the worldling, here the Apostate Monk
Came ere his fall ; and when they saw how nigh
Good lay to evil, their base spirits shrunk
As from a touch-stone which could bring to light
Unworthy natures that must walk by sight
Through lack of trust :—and thus are sceptics made
By that half-faith which seeks for good unbound
From ill ; and hearts are daily wanting found,
Upon the balance of that problem weighed.

This is the dark side of the picture. But, to say nothing of other shrines where relics repose and spots where holy influences abide, who shall reach even by conjecture to the number and extent of visions seen, prayers answered, vows suggested, lives changed, great ends dreamed, endeavored after, accomplished, inspirations, or something very like them, given to the listening heart—who shall imagine the number and extent of these things vouchsafed at one place only, the low bannisters with their coronal of starry lights round the Confession of St. Peter and St. Paul, where rich and poor kneel and say Augustine's prayer, or breathe their own secret wants and wishes? It cannot be too strong a thing to say that no one ever went to Rome without leaving it a better or a worse man than he was, with a higher or a harder heart. However this may be, it is certain that something strange occurred to Wilfrid at Rome, something just of the same sort that we hear of so frequently in these days, or which some of us may have actually experienced.

He approached Rome, his biographer tells us, in the same spirit in which St. Paul approached Jerusalem, full of a diffident anxiety lest he should have run in vain. He sought it as the legitimate fountain of catholic teaching, desiring to measure and compare his English faith with it, and prepared to abandon whatever was opposed to the doctrine, spirit, or usage of Rome. He went to a church dedicated to St. Andrew, or rather an oratory, such as was not a parish church but served by occasional priests. It appears to have been one of the earliest places he visited. There on the top of the altar was a copy of the four blessed Gospels; before this Wilfrid knelt down humbly, and prayed to God through the merits of His holy mar-

tyr St. Andrew that He would grant him the power of reading the book aright, and of preaching “the eloquence of the evangelists” to the people. From certain circumstances, more or less singular, Wilfrid was led to connect the unexpected friendship and instruction of the archdeacon Boniface with this prayer ; and he seems to have told his biographer Eddi, the precentor of Canterbury, that he gained that friend through God and the Apostle. Boniface not only instructed him in the interpretation of the Gospels, but taught him the paschal computation, and dictated to him the rules of ecclesiastical discipline. When Wilfrid’s visit drew near a close, Boniface presented him to the pope, laying open to his Holiness the cause of his journey and how strangely and perseveringly he had accomplished it ; whereupon St. Martin, laying his hand on the young Englishman’s head, dismissed him with blessing and prayer : and so Wilfrid turned his back on Rome, or rather carried Rome away with him in his heart.

Wilfrid had now a long road to traverse ; yet he had a home nearer than England, even the palace of the archbishop of Lyons. Whether the young traveller left Rome by the Porta del Popolo and went straight to the Ponte Molle, or whether he left it by the Porta degli Angeli, the gate of the Saxon Borgo, and so skirted the Tyber under Monte Mario, he would have abundant matter for meditation as he wended to Viterbo over the tawny pastures of the Campagna. This was his first visit to Rome ; he was going to embrace the ecclesiastical state in England ; how unlikely that he should ever visit Rome again ! He had nothing to carry away with him but reminiscences of profit and pleasure. He little thought how often the Eternal City must be approached by him, how he must sit in councils, plead his cause

before synods and congregations, carry to the feet of popes a load of weary wrongs and vexing calumnies and iniquitous oppressions, how the hands of kings and archbishops should be heavy on him, and that in fear of life, he should escape beyond seas, avoid the daggers of assassins and the conspiracies of monarchs, and seek refuge at that very tomb of St. Peter and St. Paul where the ardors of his youthful imagination had drunk and been satisfied in joyous pilgrimage. Rome had been the dream of his boyhood ; he had sought it, found it, and thought he had done with it. But it was not so : the word, the thought, the thing—they were to be by his sick-bed at Meaux, they were to be by his death-bed at Oundle. Ah ! so it is with all of us ; we have dreams, and they are other than we expected, and they haunt us through life, and go with us to the grave, like Wilfrid's Rome.

At Lyons, Wilfrid received a most affectionate welcome from the archbishop, who made him give a detailed narrative of all that had befallen him at Rome, and all that he saw, and all that he learned, and bade him shew him the relics wherewith Wilfrid was returning enriched to his own country. He remained with St. Delphinus three years (some say six), and from him received the clerical tonsure, St. Peter's Tonsure, as it was called : for even in this matter St. Wilfrid was still obstinately bent on Romanizing. The Scottish tonsure, called by the witty malice of the Romans the Tonsure of Simon Magus, was “a semicircle shaved from ear to ear above the forehead, not reaching to the hinder part, which was covered with hair.” It does not appear that any symbolical meaning was attached to this tonsure ; it was one of the Scottish usages to which they clung almost as fondly as to their Easter reckoning. They do not seem to have had any oriental tradition for

this custom, for the Eastern tonsure, sometimes called the Tonsure of St. Paul, consisted in shaving the whole head, and this was used in some Western monasteries.³ But the Tonsure of St. Peter went all round the head, and was a professed symbol of the Crown of Thorns, a solemn emblem setting forth the consecration of the person so marked and separated from the children of the world. This was the tonsure which Wilfrid now received at the hands of St. Delphinus. The longer Wilfrid stayed at Lyons the more necessary he seemed to the archbishop, who again proposed adopting him and making him his heir, dropping all mention of the marriage.

It would seem by the style of the good precentor of Canterbury, that Wilfrid had become so devoted to foreign usages that he might possibly have been tempted to remain at Lyons. But, as he says, God wished something better to our nation than that Wilfrid should stay there. It is not our business to enter into the causes of the cruel martyrdom of St. Delphinus. A persecution⁴ was raised against the Church, or at least the bishops who held with St. Leger of Autun, by Ebroin, the mayor of the palace, and nine bishops were put to death, and Wilfrid's host among them. There was one strife, only one, between Delphinus and his English guest ; he forbade Wilfrid to follow him to his martyrdom, and Wilfrid would not obey. "What is better," said he, "than for father and son to die together? to be with Christ together?" So he went with

³ Alban Butler.

⁴ See Michelet Hist. de France, i. 273, and Butler's Life of St. Leodegarius. Some writers have carelessly attributed this persecution to St. Bathildis, the foundress of Corbie and Chelles, an English-woman.

him to the scene of his passion. First the Archbishop with holy intrepidity suffered martyrdom ; then Wilfrid was stripped, and was standing ready, the martyr's crown hard by him : but another martyrdom than that was reserved for him ; weariness, disquiet, thwarted purposes, harsh misunderstandings, strife, exile, poverty, disgrace—these were to be the jewels of his crown. While he stood ready, some of the captains cried out, “Who is that beautiful youth, who is now preparing himself for death ?” It was answered that he was from beyond seas, an Englishman. “Spare him then,” was the reply. Eddi Stephani scarcely knows whether to rejoice at Wilfrid’s escape,⁵ or to sorrow for his missing of the crown ; but at any rate, as he observes, he was like St. John at the Latin gate, when plunged in the boiling oil ; he was a confessor ready, nay eager, for martyrdom, and that he was not actually a martyr was of God’s Providence, not of his own backwardness.

By some means or other Wilfrid got possession of his master’s body, and satisfied his affectionate reverence by procuring for it an honourable and Christian interment. The place of his martyrdom was Chalons-sur-Saone. After the burial of St. Delphinus, Wilfrid appears to have returned home without any further delay : let us cast an eye over the scene of his future labors. Oswy was at this time the King of the Northumbrians. His two sons Egfrid and Alfrid seem to have been admitted by him as partners in the sovereignty, and are by Bede and others called kings, even while their father lived. It is said by some that Wilfrid had been acquainted with Alfrid before he left England, and had

⁵ Peck in his History of Stamford makes Wilfrid only twenty-four or twenty-five years old at the time of this event. St. Delphinus is commonly honoured in France under the name of St. Chaumont.

inspired him with the same sentiments of devotedness to Rome which so distinguished himself. If this be true he can hardly have been connected with Alfrid as his tutor, as some say; but while at Lindisfarne he may have been selected for his high birth and intelligence as an occasional companion of the prince. One thing however is beyond a doubt, that Alfrid was noted for his preference of Roman usages, while Oswy was almost a bigot to the observances of the Scots. It was from Coenwalch, king of the West Saxons, that Alfrid heard of Wilfrid's landing in England, and how perfectly he had learned at Rome the veritable catholic practices in all things. He at once sent for Wilfrid, and looking on him as a pilgrim recently come from the Eternal City and as it were the representative of Rome, he flung himself at his feet and asked a blessing from him. Alfrid seems to have been never weary of conversing with Wilfrid about the discipline of the Roman Church, and doubtless what St. Wilfrid had to say, specially of the wonderful rule of St. Benedict, spurred the ardent prince to the munificence which he soon displayed in the matter of monastic foundations.

It so happened at this time that Lincolnshire, the territory of the South Mercians, was under the power of the Northumbrian king. The South Mercians did not form an integral part of his kingdom, as the Mercians north of the Trent did: but Oswy was lord paramount beyond the Trent, governing by lieutenants. After he had defeated the cruel Penda he governed his kingdom three years by Northumbrian governors; after which he appointed Peada king⁶ of the South Mercians, incorporating with Northumbria the seven thousand

⁶ Peada was made king in 658: the Saxon Chronicle says in 655; this is certainly inaccurate.

families of Mercians which dwelt on the north bank of the Trent. Peada had sought in marriage Alcfleda the daughter of Oswy. She had been denied him on account of his being an unbeliever ; but by the conversation of his friend Alfrid he became at length a convert to the faith, and was baptized by bishop Finan at Wallsend near Newcastle, and returned home, taking with him four missionary priests whose preaching Penda did not forbid, though his own heart was never surrendered to the Gospel. One of these priests, Diuma, was consecrated bishop. The Northumbrian and Mercian royal families were united by another marriage, for Alfrid married Kyneburga, one of Penda's daughters, by which he became brother-in-law to Peada. Notwithstanding these marriages, war broke out,⁷ Penda was defeated, and Peada after three years raised to be one of Oswy's vassal-kings ; for we are told that Oswy did in fact rule the whole Heptarchy, being, according to Speed, the tenth "monarch of all the Englishmen." This statement of a very perplexed history seemed necessary in order to account for Alfrid's influence in Lincolnshire.

Anxious then to see the result of Wilfrid's travels brought to bear in a real way, Alfrid, either with Peada's consent or by Oswy's authority, gave him the land of ten families on the river Welland at Stamford in Lincolnshire,⁸ wherewith to found a monastery, which was a cell in honor of St. Leonard, the hermit of

⁷ The story that Alfrid rebelled against his father, and fought on the side of Penda, though received by Father Cressy, seems quite unfounded.

⁸ Peck's arguments in favor of the Lincolnshire Stamford seem unanswerable ; the neighbourhood of Caistor, the foundation of Peterborough, and Wilfrid's having a house at Oundle, may be added as completing the evidence.

Limoges. It was under the abbey of Durham, though so far off ; Wilfrid's connection with Lindisfarne may account for that. In after ages a rent was paid from its revenues to the abbot of Croyland in return for giving up to Durham the abbey of Coldingham, which, equally distant the other way, belonged to Croyland. It is interesting to add, that, in the very year in which Oswy raised Peada to the rank of a vassal-king, he and Peada met and determined jointly to found a monastery in honor of Christ and St. Peter. This was done ; the foundation was made not many miles from Stamford, on the edge of the fens near Croyland, at a place called Medehampstead : this was the beginning of Peterborough Abbey. Wilfrid's abbey of St. Leonard at Stamford was rebuilt in a sumptuous manner at the joint expense of William the Conqueror and William Kairliph bishop of Durham.⁹

Wilfrid was now beginning to realize his dreams ; for into his new monastery he introduced the rule of St. Benedict. It is not our business to enter into the question of St. Augustine's introduction of that rule into England ; the monastic houses of the northern shires were from the first Scottish, and were established chiefly under the episcopate of St. Aidan. The rule therefore which prevailed in them was either the ancient Irish rule or that reform of it called the Rule of St. Columban : and it seems an undoubted fact that in the *north* of England at least the Rule of St. Benedict was introduced by St. Wilfrid. It was part, and a chief part, of his whole system ; in fact, the great means to the one end towards which he steadily bent his whole energies, the reduction of the Northumbrian Church to

⁹ It was not before the reign of William that it was dedicated under St. Leonard's name.

catholic unity. This is a very interesting subject, but there is nothing more perplexing in monastic antiquities, and we cannot pretend to the various erudition requisite for handling it properly. Yet it is so intimately connected with the life of St. Wilfrid, being a principal feature of that old state of things, to the extinction of which he devoted himself, that we may be allowed to say a little about it.

The Rule of St. Benedict has been to previous monastic institutions almost like a deluge. It has well-nigh obliterated all vestiges of them, so that a clear view of them (so far as the West is concerned) is now impossible. Some have accused the partizans of Roman usages of fraudulently destroying most of the works of St. Columban; some of them, however, were found in the fifteenth century at Besançon and Bobbio, and were carried to the libraries of Rome and Milan. Of his rule enough is known to enable us to institute a very striking contrast between it and that of St. Benedict. The Benedictines maintain that it was the same to all intents and purposes, and it is a hardy thing to contradict Mabillon¹ on a matter of monastic history; but when the nuns ask St. Donatus, bishop of Besançon and disciple of Columban, to get them three rules that they may compare them, namely, the Rules of Cæsarius of Arles, Benedict, and Columban, it is plain some difference existed between them. The Bollandists again say that in their similarity and diversity the two rules may be compared to those of the Franciscans and Dominicans: this comparison certainly lays hold of the distinctive characteristics of both, yet is hardly fair to the modern orders. Putting aside then all considera-

¹ Yet Mabillon himself distinguishes between the Rule and the Institute.

tion of the spiritual and mystic wisdom in both rules, (for Saints composed them, and we must look on such things very far off,) we may institute an historical contrast between the two, which will help us better to appreciate what St. Wilfrid's work was and how he did it. The Irish Rule, confining ourselves to the children of its reform, produced St. Gall, St. Magnus, St. Theodore, St. Attalus, St. Romaric, St. Omer, St. Bertin, St. Amand, St. Wandrille, and others : let this be enough to shew how wonderful it was as a discipline for Saints : ours is a lower view of the matter.

No one can look into the Rule of St. Benedict without seeing that it is a code by which a mighty empire could almost be governed : it is full of magnificent principles and almost miraculous foresight : its characteristics are consistency of purpose, a large-hearted view of the capabilities of human nature, and a sort of grandeur which seems to descend into its very details and fill them with practical life. This is what may be said of the Benedictine Rule simply considered as a fact in the history of civilization. But what is still more striking is its want of stiffness and of rigid formalism,—in short its pliability : this it is which enabled it to do what it has done for the Church, and like a Gothic cathedral, to receive numerous modifications and additions and even some retrenchments, and yet to remain obviously, indisputably, cognizably the same Benedictine Rule. This is, so to speak, the *idiosyncrasy* of the rule. It gives it a trustfulness which makes it a thing men can work with for ever. This is just the one thing wanting in the Rule of St. Columban ; it has no pliability, no trustfulness ; it did not dare to commit itself to the responsible agency of superiors, to make itself over in faith to the keeping of holy obedience. It

was a *written thing*, and could advance no further ; it remained a written thing, and grew to nothing else. This might be very curiously illustrated by the penances prescribed. Nothing seems left to the discretion of the abbot, not the most trivial matters. For the monk who forgets to say *Amen* after grace, or sign the cross on his spoon or lantern, who spills his beer, who hits the table with his knife, who coughs while intoning the psalms, and sundry other things, the number of lashes even, as well as days of penance, are fixed, and are unalterable. The abbot has no discretion ; there is no weighing of circumstance or comparing of occasions allowed to him. It is a minute, burdensome, obstinate, cumbrous code, that is, treating it as an historical document. These characteristics run through it, full as it is of many touching disclosures of deep spiritual wisdom,—such as the law which enjoins a penance on any monk relating a sin of which he has already repented, and in repentance sacramental confession is included, as by so doing he risks the dangerous awakening of past temptations.²

Now such a rule, with such sacred wisdom and yet with such practical deficiencies, is precisely what might

² Mr. Dunham in his History of the Middle Ages has been more just to the Saints than most modern writers in England. But it is a random way of writing history to throw out without particular references such statements as the following : that the Scottish monks were not stationary like the Benedictines, but vagabonds—that their abbots were only in priests' orders, yet consecrated bishops and were considered as the superiors of bishops—that the Anglo-Saxons would never have recognised holiness unless joined with high birth—that the history of the Universal Church affords, so far as he knows, no instance of a deacon being allowed to preach (St. Ephrem is a famous instance) and many other such assertions. In spite of his erudition, this inaccurate rashness makes him an unsafe guide.

have been divined before as likely to come from the Irish or Scottish Church. Where a centre of unity was not acknowledged, there could be no trustfulness ; it would not be safe to be truthful, but it would be wise to be suspicious. That Church is described by a French historian as animated by an “indomitable spirit of individuality and opposition.” With much that was high and holy, there was a fierceness, an opinionated temper, an almost unconscious attitude of irritable defence—in theological language, a dislike of Rome, which is quite fatal to the formation of a catholic temper either in a community or in an individual. Without fancifulness, all this may be traced more or less in the lineaments of St. Columban’s Rule ; it is a portrait of the Church which gave it birth. Let us simply enumerate a few of the peculiarities of the Irish Church ; there was the paschal cycle, the tonsure, the baptizing of rich people’s children³ in milk, the frequent marriage of bishops, even married monks with their wives and children claiming a share of what was offered at the altar ; these were the things which grouped themselves round the denial of the Roman centre of unity. The monastic rule of this Church was the stronghold of its system, for it happened at that time that its spirituality, which is its strength, was mainly among the monks. St. Benedict’s Rule was the weapon which Wilfrid took to fight down the Rule of St. Columban.

The characteristics of St. Columban’s Rule, as representing the *temper* of the Celtic Church and civilization, are the more striking, inasmuch as the genius and disposition of its author were singularly opposed to the hardness and inflexibility of his rule. He was a poet,

³ Carpentier Suppl. Gloss. Ducange, t. i. p. 30, ap. Michelet. i. 263, n. 4.

and his works are described as being remarkable for "imagination, energetic painting, and burning zeal," which we should not have at all expected from the author of such a rule: its uncompromising application of principles is only what we should look for from what we know of the history of that stern rebuker of wickedness in high places. Otherwise the difference between the temper of the rule and the genius of its author shews very strongly the justice of the view which would regard the rule as the natural growth and representation of the Celtic spirit. It may be true that Yepes, in his *Coronica General de la Orden de San Benito*, is guilty of an anachronism of twenty years in ascribing the cause of St. Columban's departure from Britain to the preaching of St. Augustine and his companions, as *Roman* missionaries, yet the mistake shews how vividly the Benedictine historian realized the antagonism between the two rules. As persons now-a-days really do not know what asceticism is, and might with an easy ignorance conclude from what has been said that St. Columban was an excessive formalist, we will in justice to the blessed Saint quote one passage of his writings from the historian cited above.⁴ "Let us not suppose," says St. Columban, in the second of his instructions, "that to fatigue the dirt of our bodies with fastings and vigils will avail us, without a reformation of manners. To macerate the flesh, without corresponding benefit to the soul, is like cultivating ground which can never yield fruit: it is like constructing a statue, without all gold, within all mud. Why carry the war outside the gates, if the enclosure is a prey to ruin? What should we say of a man who cleansed his vine all around, yet inwardly suffered it to

⁴ Vol. ii. p. 187.

be consumed by vermin and weeds ? A religion of bodily gestures and motions is vain ; vain is bodily suffering, vain the care which we take of our outward man, if we do not also superintend and cleanse the inward. True piety consists in humility, not of body, but of heart. Of what avail are the combats which the servant wages with the passions, when these passions live in peace with the master ? Nor is it sufficient to hear and read of virtue. Will mere words cleanse a man's house from filth ? Can a daily task be accomplished without labor and sweat of the brow ? Wherefore gird on your armour : he who does not valiantly fight, can never obtain the crown."

Of course nothing which has been said can be construed into disparagement of the blessed Saints who came forth out of that ecclesiastical system, neither is it meant to assert that the Scots were in overt schism. Indeed there is very good negative evidence⁵ to shew that St. Columban did himself receive at length the Roman computation for Easter. But the matter, if deeply examined, does put on a most serious aspect, much more serious than many church historians seem to be aware of. It is not too much to say that through the influence of the Scottish Church and of the Celtic civilization, of which Ireland was the centre, Christendom approached to the very verge of a tremendous schism, almost reaching in extent to the unhappy sacrilege of the sixteenth century. Ireland, Scotland, the northern shires⁶ of England, Bavaria, Belgium, part of Switzerland, all France north of the Loire, with portions of Germany, were impregnated with the spirit of the Scotch Church, traversed by Celtic missionaries, peopled with Celtic monasteries,

⁵ Namely, the silence of the Italian monks in the Council of Maçon.

⁶ Perhaps the midland also.

and accustomed to send their young men to be educated in Irish colleges ; in fact, Ireland was a great centre of ecclesiastical civilization, and its temper was vehemently opposed to that of Rome. In many little ways we may trace the Celtic spirit growing and pushing forward, disclosing itself more and more, getting consistency through an increasing consciousness of its own strength, until a schism seemed actually threatening. It pleased God of His mercy to interpose. The Roman mission of St. Gregory to the Saxons appears in this point of view like an inspiration ; the energy of the Roman system began to develope itself close by the threshold of the Celtic Church, and ultimately absorbed it, without persecution or destruction. What the Roman mission did for the British Isles, the Carlovingians did for France, Belgium, and Bavaria : it was their policy, their evident *line*, to use a familiar word, to attach themselves to the pope, and to identify themselves with the Roman movement, just as Clothaire and Dagobert were partizans of the Irish system. But what was the worldly policy of the Carlovingians was something of far deeper import to the welfare of the Church ; it was overruled to the absorbing of the rival system into the system of Rome ; and so health was restored to the whole of western Christendom. Now supposing this to be not an exaggerated view of the state of things, we may perceive the real importance of the Scottish usages above and beyond their seemingly trivial formalism ; and further, we can fix more accurately the precise place which St. Wilfrid occupies in English church history. The Celtic feeling, Celtic rule, Celtic usages, had risen like a flood over the traces of St. Paulinus' holy work. The bishops and the monks were the children of Iona, and the people might well follow them, for they were veritable Saints. Wilfrid was the

Augustine of the northern shires : in him Rome gave battle to the opposing spirit in one of its chief strongholds, and prevailed. And it pleased God that he who had this lofty mission to fulfil should also be a great and blessed Saint.

Wilfrid does not appear to have remained long at Stamford. His early associations bound him to the north, and it was there his sphere of action lay. Some time before this, and probably during Wilfrid's absence abroad, Alfrid had founded a monastery at Ripon in Yorkshire, in which he was now anxious to bring about a reform ; in other words to compel the Scottish monks to adopt the Roman usages. But they resisted, and preferred to surrender the place rather than forego their hereditary customs. Alfrid bestowed the monastery with its endowment upon Wilfrid. But he was anxious to have the Saint for his spiritual director, and endeavoured to have him ordained priest. Agilbert, the bishop of Dorchester, and afterwards bishop of Paris, happened to be resident in his court at that time, and to him Alfrid made application. The history of Agilbert has some singular points of resemblance to that of Wilfrid. Holy man as he was, he became distasteful to king Kenwalch because of the foreign accent with which he pronounced Saxon, and further from his occasionally preaching or speaking in French, which the king did not understand. Kenwalch, unable to drive Agilbert from his see, arbitrarily divided the bishopric, created the new see of Winchester, and appointed to it bishop Wine, who had been consecrated abroad. The whole action shews in what peril the rights and liberties of the Saxon Church then stood, and what an urgent call there was for a vigorous resistance to such a debasing tyranny. It is painfully instructive to remem-

ber that Wine, the obtruded bishop, was the father of simony in England: surely this is a pregnant fact. Agilbert very properly refused to sanction an ecclesiastical change in which the Church had not been consulted, and he was in consequence obliged to retire from the dominions of Kenwalch. The persecuted bishop fled first to the court of Alfrid, and after some stay there, during which he helped forward the Roman movement, he went into France, and was ultimately made bishop of Paris.

Alfrid told Agilbert that Wilfrid had but lately come from Rome, and that he was a person of singular merit, learned yet humble, docile but plain-spoken, kind-hearted but with a practical authoritative way about him, calculated to influence persons extremely. Agilbert replied that such a man ought rather to be a bishop than a priest, and his words were probably not without weight in the mind of Alfrid, and shortly brought forth fruit. Wilfrid's ordination took place either in 662 or 663; and we read that as abbot of Ripon he was noticed for his extreme humility, his bodily austerities and long prayers, but above all for his goodness to the widow and the orphan. Meanwhile he was not without business of an external kind. Whether it was that ecclesiastics consulted him or that Alfrid acted on his advice in matters connected with the Church, we read that his fame for expertness in such things spread far and wide. In 664 an occurrence took place which brought him out upon the stormy scene of action. Henceforth Wilfrid has no private life; nothing but the Lord's "*Quiescite pusillum,*" from time to time resorted to for his soul's health, the chief schoolhouse of the Saints, but of whose secrets history has nothing to reveal.

The year 664 was a very eventful one in the history of the Saxon Church, and that for many reasons. Our attention is chiefly called to the Council of Whitby, the part Wilfrid took in it, and the decision come to with regard to the Scottish and Roman usages, particularly in reference to the observation of Easter. A few words may be necessary on this subject. The error of the Quartodecimans, condemned by the Nicene Council, consisted in following the custom of the Jews : thus, Easter might or might not fall on a Sunday, being invariably the fourteenth day of the first lunar month nearest the spring equinox. Now, it is inaccurate to call the Scots Quartodecimans, though it is by no means uncommon to do so. They always kept Easter on a Sunday, and only on the fourteenth day of the Quartodecimans when it chanced to be a Sunday. The Scotch calculation was erroneous, and their practice not in harmony with that of the catholic Church ; yet they ran counter to no formally expressed decision of the Church, and therefore were not overtly schismatics, though on the verge of schism, as non-conformity ever is at its best estate. The Scotch difference, then, was not a light one, for it infringed the sacred unity of the Church ; and by assuming an attitude of opposition to the great body of Christendom, it must certainly,—the more certainly because of the simply ritual character of the eccentric usage,—produce an uncatholic temper in the section of the Church where it prevailed. The greatness and the littleness of matters connected with the Church depend in no slight measure upon the love wherewith the men of any particular age regard the sanctities of the catholic faith ; and this is a sufficient answer, in passing, to the shallow sneers which the vehemence of the paschal controversy provokes in men

not habituated to meditation on the Lord's Passion, or the sweet strictness of the Lent fast, and who therefore disesteem the solemn joy of Easter wherein the Communion of Saints is so aptly and so deeply realized.

The history of the sundry attempts made to introduce the Roman usage may be thus briefly sketched.⁷ The first was that of St. Augustine, and this was followed by a treatise of Cummian, a Scotch monk, who had joined himself to the Roman movement, and wrote an elaborate letter to Segienus, abbot of Iona, to justify his conduct. When St. Finan succeeded St. Aidan in the see of Lindisfarne, Ronan, a Scotch monk, educated in France or Italy, mooted the question again among the monks of Lindisfarne, and that too with considerable effect, though he failed in persuading the bishop. Doubtless it was the sensation produced by Ronan, which created the willingness shewn by the monks when Wilfrid expressed his doubts in the monastery, and proposed his journey to Rome. The fourth raising of the question fell in the year 664 at the very Council of Whitby, in whose proceedings Wilfrid took a leading part.

The Council took place in the early part of the year, as is proved by the brief episcopate of Tuda. The Scotch party was represented by St. Hilda the abbess of Whitby, bishop Colman and his clergy, bishop Cedd, and king Oswy; the Roman party by bishop Agilbert, the priests Agatho and Wilfrid, James, the deacon of St. Paulinus, a most venerable man surely in the sight of the Council as witnessing to the first conversion of the country, Romanus, a Kentish priest, who had come into the north with the queen Eanflede, and finally by king Alfrid. St. Cedd appears to have acted as interpreter

⁷ Mabillon, præf. in Sæc. iii. Ben. sect. i.

when necessary. It was a solemn day for the north when all these Saints met at Whitby in council, with no less an end before them than a reverential seeking for catholic unity on the one hand, and a laudable jealousy for the sacredness of hereditary religion on the other. Wilfrid's heart beat high that day ; how had he labored for this end, as well as dreamed of it ! His travels, his learning, his actions, seemed to concentrate here ; the question was, so to speak, in an assailable position, capable of being brought to a practical decision. The actual narrative we cannot do better than give in St. Bede's own words.⁸

" King Oswy first observed, that it behoved those who served one God to observe the same rule of life ; and as they all expected the same kingdom in heaven, so they ought not to differ in the celebration of the Divine mysteries ; but rather to enquire which was the truest tradition, that the same might be followed by all. He then commanded his bishop Colman first to declare what the custom was, which he observed, and whence it derived its origin. Then Colman said, ' The Easter which I keep, I received from my elders, who sent me bishop hither. All our forefathers, men beloved of God, are known to have kept it after the same manner ; and that the same may not seem to any contemptible or worthy to be rejected, it is the same which St. John the evangelist, the disciple beloved of our Lord, with all the Churches over which he presided, is recorded to have observed.' Having said thus much, and more to the like effect, the king commanded Agilbert to shew whence his custom of keeping Easter was derived, or on what authority it was grounded. Agilbert answered,

⁸ Lib. iii. c. 25.

‘ I desire that my disciple, the priest Wilfrid, may speak in my stead ; because we both concur with the other followers of the ecclesiastical tradition that are here present, and he can better explain our opinion in the English language, than I can by an interpreter.’

“ Then Wilfrid being ordered by the king to speak, delivered himself thus : ‘ The Easter which we observe we saw celebrated by all at Rome, where the blessed apostles Peter and Paul taught, suffered, and were buried ; we saw the same done in Italy and in France, when we travelled through those countries for pilgrimage and prayer. We find the same practised in Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece, and all the world, wher- ever the Church of Christ is spread abroad, through several nations and tongues at one and the same time ; except only these and their accomplices in obstinacy, I mean the Picts and the Britons, who foolishly, in these two remote islands of the world, and only in part even of them, oppose all the rest of the universe.’ When he had so said, Colman answered, ‘ It is strange that you will call our labors foolish, wherein we follow the example of so great an apostle, who was thought worthy to lay his head on our Lord’s Bosom, when all the world knows him to have lived most wisely.’ Wilfrid replied, ‘ Far be it from us to charge John with folly, for he literally observed the precepts of the Jewish law, whilst the Church judaized in many points, and the apostles were not able at once to cast off all the observances of the law which had been instituted by God : as it is ne- cessary that all who come to the faith should forsake the idols which were invented by devils, that they might not give scandal to the Jews that were among the Gen- tiles. For this reason it was, that Paul circumcised Timothy, that he offered sacrifice in the temple, that he

shaved his head with Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth, for no other advantage than to avoid giving scandal to the Jews. Hence it was that James said to the same Paul, You see, brother, how many thousands of the Jews have believed ; and they are all zealous for the law. And yet, at this time, the Gospel spreading throughout the world, it is needless,—nay, it is not lawful, for the faithful either to be circumcised, or to offer up to God sacrifices of flesh. So John, pursuant to the custom of the law, began the celebration of the feast of Easter on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening, not regarding whether the same happened on a Saturday, on any other day. But, when Peter preached at Rome, being mindful that our Lord arose from the dead and gave the world the hopes of resurrection on the first day after the sabbath, he understood that Easter ought to be observed, so as always to stay till the rising of the moon on the fourteenth day of the first moon, in the evening, according to the custom and precepts of the law, even as John did. And when that came, if the Lord's day (then called the first day after the sabbath) was the next day, he began that very evening to keep Easter, as we all do at this day. But if the Lord's day did not fall the next morning after the fourteenth moon, but on the sixteenth, or the seventeenth, or any other moon till the twenty-first, he waited for that, and on the Saturday before, in the evening, began to observe the holy solemnity of Easter. Thus it came to pass, that Easter Sunday was only kept from the fifteenth moon to the twenty-first. Nor does this evangelical and apostolic tradition abolish the law, but rather fulfil it ; the command being to keep the passover from the fourteenth moon of the first month in the evening to the twenty-first moon of the same month, in the evening ; which

observance all the successors of St. John in Asia, since his death, and all the Church throughout the world, have since followed ; and that this is the true Easter, and the only one to be kept by the faithful, was not newly decreed by the Council of Nice, but only confirmed afresh, as the Church history informs us. Thus it appears that you, Colman, neither follow the example of John, as you imagine, nor that of Peter, whose traditions you knowingly contradict ; and that you neither agree with the law nor the Gospel in the keeping of your Easter. For John, keeping the Paschal time according to the degree of the Mosaic law, had no regard to the first day after the Sabbath, which you do not practise, who celebrate Easter only on the first day after the Sabbath. Peter kept Easter Sunday between the fifteenth and the twenty-first moon, which you do not, but keep Easter Sunday from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon ; so that you often begin Easter on the thirteenth moon in the evening, whereof neither the law made any mention ; nor did our Lord, the author and giver of the Gospel, on that day, but on the fourteenth, either eat the old passover in the evening, or deliver the sacraments of the New Testament, to be celebrated by the Church, in memory of his Passion. Besides, in your celebration of Easter, you utterly exclude the twenty-first moon, which the law ordered to be principally observed. Thus, as I said before, you agree neither with John nor Peter, nor with the law, nor the Gospel, in the celebration of the greatest festival.'

"To this Colman rejoined, 'Did Anatolius, a holy man, and much commended in Church history, act contrary to the law and the Gospel, when he wrote that Easter was to be celebrated from the fourteenth to the twentieth ? Is it to be believed that our most reverend

father Columba, and his successors, men beloved by God, who kept Easter after the same manner, thought or acted contrary to the Divine Writings ? Whereas there were many among them, whose sanctity is testified by heavenly signs and the working of miracles, whose life, customs and discipline, I never cease to follow, not questioning their being Saints in heaven.'

" 'It is evident,' said Wilfrid, 'that Anatolius was a most holy, learned, and commendable man ; but what have you to do with him, since you do not observe his decrees ? For he, following the rule of truth in his Easter, appointed a revolution of nineteen years, which either you are ignorant of, or, if you know it, though it is kept by the whole Church of Christ, yet you despise it. He so computed the fourteenth moon in the Easter of our Lord, that according to the custom of the Egyptians, he acknowledged it to be the fifteenth moon in the evening ; so in like manner he assigned the twentieth to Easter Sunday, as believing that to be the twenty-first moon, when the sun had set ; which rule and distinction of his it appears you are ignorant of, in that you sometimes keep Easter before the full of the moon, that is, on the thirteenth day. Concerning your father Columba and his followers, whose sanctity you say you imitate, and whose rules and precepts you observe, which have been confirmed by signs from heaven, I may answer, that when many on the day of judgment shall say to our Lord, that in His Name they prophesied and cast out devils, and wrought many wonders, our Lord will reply that He never knew them. But far be it from me that I should say so of your fathers, because it is much more just to believe what is good than what is evil of persons whom one does not know. Wherefore I do not deny those to have been God's servants, and beloved by Him, who with

rustic simplicity, but pious intentions, have themselves loved Him. Nor do I think that such keeping of Easter was very prejudicial to them, as long as none came to shew them a more perfect rule ; and yet I do believe that they, if any catholic adviser had come among them, would have as readily followed his admonitions, as they are known to have kept those commandments of God which they had learned and knew. But as for you and your companions, you certainly sin if, having heard the decrees of the Apostolic See and of the Universal Church, and that the same is confirmed by Holy Writ, you refuse to follow them ; for, though your fathers were holy, do you think that their small number, in a corner of the remotest island, is to be preferred before the Universal Church of Christ throughout the world ? And if that Columba of yours (and I may say, ours also, if he was Christ's servant,) was a holy man and powerful in miracles, yet could he be preferred before the most blessed prince of the apostles, to whom our Lord said, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and to thee I will give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven ? ”⁹

King Oswy, as we have already intimated, was strongly attached to the Scottish usages, but the speech of Wilfrid seems to have been quite convincing ; at all events his predilections were for the moment overborne by the abbot's eloquence. Common sense, when prejudice does not come in the way, is no mean theologian, and king Oswy appears at once to have divined the proper test by which to try the catholicity of a doctrine or

⁹ Dr. Giles' Translation has been used in this extract, with a few verbal changes.

a rite. Wilfrid had scarcely concluded the text regarding St. Peter when the king turned to the bishop of Lindisfarne, and said, "Is it true, Colman, that these words were spoken to Peter by our Lord?" He replied, "It is true, O king." "Then," rejoined Oswy, "can you show any such power given to your Columba?" Colman answered, "None." "Then," added the king, "do you both agree that these words were principally directed to Peter, and that the keys of heaven were given to him by our Lord?" Both Wilfrid and Colman answered, "We do." Whereupon Oswy replied, "And I also say unto you, that he is the doorkeeper, whom I will not contradict, but will, as far as I know and am able, in all things obey his decrees, lest, when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys." The decision of the Council was, that it was better to abandon the old imperfect custom and conform to the Roman practice.

This judgment of the Council of Whitby was a great step towards the consummation of Wilfrid's hopes. In his speech he had laid open the true disease of England, the disease which was then drawing it onward to the brink of schism, which clung to it more or less, succouring the evil and baffling the good, even up to the primacy of Archbishop Warham; which plunged it into that depth of sacrilege, heresy, and libertinism, in which it has lain since the time of Henry VIII., and has hitherto retarded its penitence and self-abasement. He referred the stubborn non-conformity of his times to that narrow temper of self-praise fostered by our insular position, leading the great mass of common minds to overlook with a bigoted superciliousness almost the very existence of the Universal Church, and to disesteem the privileges of

communion with it. A *particular* church, priding itself upon its separate rights and independent jurisdiction, must end at last in arrogating to itself an inward purity, a liberty of change, and an empire over the individual conscience far more stringent and tyrannous than was ever claimed by the Universal Church. In other words, nationalism must result in the meanest form of bigotry, and, as being essentially demoralizing, must be a fearful heresy in theology. Meanwhile it should not be forgotten that much is to be said, very much indeed, for the pertinacity of St. Colman, and his retirement from his see. A controversy and a separation where both parties were holy men, and both at this day venerated by the Church—this is a fact which nothing but the catholic Church can display, a noble phenomenon not rare in her miraculous history.

This controversy about Easter was one of such great importance in the history of the Saxon Church, as in reality going deeper than itself, and affecting the vitals of a Church, and Wilfrid took such a leading part in the happy settlement of the question, that it seems quite necessary to carry on and conclude in his life the further history of the debate. After the Council of Whitby, St. Colman and his adherents retired into Scotland ; and it was into that country that the war against the Scottish usages was carried. It was about the year 690, twenty-six years after this Council, that St. Adamnan, the abbot of Iona, came into England on business. He was a man whose mind had been enlarged by foreign travel, and therefore, as being more free from bigotry, was also more likely to appreciate the many privileges of catholic uniformity. He was struck with the Roman usages in England, and made them his study ; the consequence of which was an ardent adoption of them. On

his return into Scotland he exerted all his influence to bring about conformity with the Holy Roman Church ; he extended his labors even into Ireland. Great success appears to have followed ; indeed, the greater part of the Irish abandoned their faulty cycle, and many in the British Church likewise. But a prophet is without honor in his own country ; abbot though he was, his own monks of Iona resisted the change, and he was unable to force it upon them. Iona had so long taken the lead, as a kind of ecclesiastical metropolis, the university of the Scottish system, that it was natural to expect a vigorous opposition there. Paltry motives would reinforce worthy motives, and so create a popular clamor in support of such as were honestly and devoutly attached to their hereditary usages. In the beginning of the eighth century the Church of the West Saxons felt the inconveniences of non-conformity in the practices of the numerous British congregations subject to that nation. A synod was held, and Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury, was instructed to write a treatise on the Easter question, in order to reduce the Britons to conformity. St. Bede describes it as a book of singular merit, and adds that so persuasive was it that it induced many to forego their ancient custom and adopt the catholic celebration of our Lord's resurrection. In 710, or about that year, Naitan, king of the Picts, sent messengers to St. Ceolfrid, abbot of Jarrow, to receive instruction in Roman usages, and Ceolfrid's letter seems to have done a very great deal both to spread and consolidate the following of Roman traditions. But the important letter itself, as well as the interesting circumstances connected with it, belong rather to the life of the holy author himself.

The conclusion of this controversy, and the reduction of Iona itself to catholic uniformity, must be entered upon

somewhat more at length. Wilfrid was the chosen instrument to bring about this happy issue in the Northumbrian Church ; but in the way of Christian retribution, the victory was not complete. The Scottish Church had been a second mother to the Northumbrian Church, and it had filled the throne of Lindisfarne with four blessed Saints. It was needful that the English daughter should convey to the Scottish mother that better thing which had been given to her, full communion of rites as well as doctrines with the Universal Church. The man who finished Wilfrid's work was Egbert, and that was fifty-two years after the Council of Whitby.¹

The year of the Council, 664, was also distinguished by a fearful pestilence ; the man who was destined to complete Wilfrid's work seems to have learnt his vocation from his sufferings in that disease, and in the very year when Wilfrid had gained his victory in Northumberland. So is Providence silently carrying out its designs in many places at once, and accomplishing its merciful intentions through long obscure preparations. We now and then catch a glimpse of these parallel lines, far apart, often seemingly diverging and swerving the wrong way ; and when history lays bare such things, she is fulfilling her highest function, and our business is to acknowledge and adore. In this very year, then, 664, the pestilence reached a monastery in Ireland, called Rathmelsigi. It was at that time a very general custom for English youths to frequent the Scottish monasteries in Ireland, as well for education as advancement in spiritual perfection. The hospitable Scots received

¹ Mabillon seems to have quoted Bede inaccurately, when he says that Egbert's labors were only one year after the letter of St. Ceolfrid. St. Bede says, “*nec multo post*,” not *anno insequente*, and a few lines further on specifies the year, 716.

all who came, fed them daily without any charge, furnished them with books to read, and cheerfully instructed those who sought for advice. In this monastery of Rathmelsigi were two English youths, brothers, named Ethelhun and Egbert, whose third brother, Ethelwin, was afterwards bishop of Lincoln, and died in the odor of sanctity. So fatal was the plague in that house that at length all died but these two brothers, and they were grievously sick, and in expectation of death. Egbert had still strength to leave the infirmary, and going aside into a place where he could be secret, he meditated upon the sins of his past life. Who shall confront that vision and remain unmoved ? Such possession did the spirit of compunction take of Egbert's whole being, that the tears gushed out from his eyes, and in an agony of earnestness he prayed that he might not die yet, but be kept alive to do penance for the sins of his careless boyhood. He vowed, if God would deign to prolong his life, to recite the whole Psalter daily, besides the Canonical Hours, unless prevented by sickness, and to fast one whole day and night every week, and further to exile himself from his native land, and be a stranger and a wanderer his whole life long, for Christ's sake and the punishment of his youthful sins. After making this vow, he returned into the infirmary, where he found his brother Ethelhun asleep. He also lay down, and remained quiet, but wakeful. Shortly afterwards Ethelhun awoke, and looking upon Egbert, said, "Alas ! brother Egbert, what have you done ? I was in hopes that we should have entered together into life everlasting ; but know that what you prayed for is granted." For God had revealed Egbert's vow to his brother in a dream, with an assurance that it was accepted. The next night Ethelhun entered into his rest, and Egbert slowly re-

covered. Such were the beginnings of the Saint whom God raised up to complete St. Wilfrid's work. His earnest piety, his acts and austerities, his connection with Willebrord and the German missions, will be related in his own life. It is enough to state here, that in 716, the seventy-seventh of the Saint's life, he won over the monks of Iona by his eloquence and gentle demeanor, and thus established Roman traditions and usages in the very head-quarters of the old Scottish customs. And this may be considered the termination of that long and vexing controversy which had so often menaced the Church with overt schism. The cursory sketch here given is sufficient to shew how far St. Wilfrid aided the settlement of it, and that he is in fact the person to whom we owe the reduction of the Northumbrian Church to catholic uniformity.

The fearful pestilence of 664 gathered many of the Saxon Saints into the garner of the Lord. Two bishops fell victims to it in Northumbria ; St. Cedd, the bishop of London, who from time to time retired into his monastery in the north, and likewise Tuda, the bishop of Lindisfarne. The vacancy caused by the death of this latter prelate was the source of Wilfrid's long and sanctifying troubles. It would appear that for some time after the Council of Whitby, king Oswy was a resolute defender of the Roman usages,—the more zealous, perhaps, in order to make amends for his former strenuousness in behalf of the Scottish traditions ; and that afterwards his fervor cooled down, and he reverted to his former partialities in behalf of his hereditary customs. This conjecture seems the only explanation of a difficult and perplexing chapter in Wilfrid's history.²

² Mr. Soames says, Wilfrid disgusted people by going about France

There is no doubt that Alfrid proposed the elevation of Wilfrid to the vacant throne of Lindisfarne, and it is said that every one agreed he was the fittest person, from his austere life, wonderful knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, devout study of the lives of the Saints, and incessant perusal of the ecclesiastical canons. Oswy certainly assented to Wilfrid's nomination, even if he did not take an active part in the matter. Wilfrid most humbly pleaded his own unworthiness, neither did he accept the weighty burden of the episcopate till it became a scruple with him, lest he should be rejecting a manifestly Divine vocation. But when he had consented to undertake this high office in the Church, other scruples arose in his mind of a very serious nature. The Saxon Church was in a state of deplorable confusion : the see of Canterbury was without a bishop ; it was exceedingly doubtful whether the ordination of any of the existing bishops, except Wine, of the West Saxons, had been canonical ; it was quite open to a question whether the Scottish non-conformity did not amount to schism, when Rome had spoken so plainly about the matter ; and lastly, there was a gross, and open, and unresisted Erastianism throughout the island, most grievous to a pious mind, and full of perplexity. Bishop Agilbert seemed almost to have given the system up : though he had been both witness and agent in the steps taken by the Council of Whitby to catholicize the English Church, yet he had now retired into France ; and his example would greatly enhance the difficulty which tender consciences would feel in positions of trust, as authorized rulers or teachers. Wilfrid therefore spoke his mind openly to the two kings. He said it was far from his wish to vilify the parading his episcopal dignity and pomp ; but he does not vouchsafe to give us his authority for the assertion.

existing bishops, but that their position, with reference to the apostolic see, was such, that he could not submit to receive consecration at their hands. In short, he made it a condition of his acceptance of the bishopric of Lindisfarne, that he should be sent into France to receive an undeniably canonical consecration.

To many persons in our days these scruples will seem so unreal as to be unintelligible ; while to others, and those not a few, they will have a distressing reality. Of course those who do not believe in the divine institution of the Visible Church and the mysteriousness of her privileges, will perceive in St. Wilfrid's hesitation nothing but a superstitious and judaizing spirit ; more especially when, through long disesteem of apostolic order, they have learned to look on jealousy for catholic doctrines and the high-minded anathemas of Holy Church as bigotry, ignorance, or at best, great uncharitableness. It is quite impossible for any one to sustain for long an affectionate jealousy about the doctrines which concern the Divine Person and Two Natures of our Lord, who is not likewise exceedingly jealous for the divine forms, unity, ritual and succession of the Visible Church. The preservation of true saving doctrine is tied to the formal constitution of the Visible Church just as much, and with as infrequent exceptions, as the gift of regeneration is tied to the form of Baptism, or the Justifying Presence of Christ consigned to the Sacrifice of the Altar. The world *assumes* the divine forms of the Church to be mere externals, and arguing from its own unwarrantable premiss, condemns the Saints as verbal disputants and sticklers for empty ceremonial. No wonder, then, that in these days, St. Wilfrid's scruples should be matter of derision. But there are others who find the present state of things only too fruitful in similar perplexities,

and the danger is not slight of their putting themselves into a false position in consequence of their distress. Under any circumstances the office of ecclesiastical rulers, teachers, and priests, is full of difficulty from its double nature. They who bear it have not only the government and discipline of themselves to look to, their growth, mutations, lapses, as lay Christians have, but to this they superadd another entire second life, through their solemn and sacramental relations to others. Is it not then a very fearful thing for them to have a doubt cast on the efficacy of their priesthood, the reality of those tremendous acts which they have performed in the name of priests, and the truthfulness of their absolutions and consecrations ? and if we further assume the possible cases of ailing health and broken spirits, what a burden must it be for reason to bear, and not give way? Indeed, it is hardly right to go on dwelling upon it. Enough has been said to suggest more : there is *some* support in seeing that so great a Saint as Wilfrid keenly felt a somewhat similar position, and did not hesitate to act at much cost upon these feelings. But, further than this, is there not almost incalculable comfort in reflecting on the actual history ? Wilfrid stood, as all men stand in their generation, amidst the blinding battle which the present always is : he was oppressed with doubts about the system of his Church, because of the relation in which it stood to the chief bishop : he was able at once, though with some pains, to clear up his position. This latter mercy may be denied to us ; but we, looking at Wilfrid's days as part of the past, are permitted to see the Church whose system he doubted of recognized as an integral part of the Body Catholic, the prelates whose consecration he distrusted canonized as Saints, his own rival, whose ordination was indisputably uncanonical,

now revered as one of our holiest English bishops. When we naturally couple together, almost without thought, St. Wilfrid and St. Chad, we read ourselves a lesson, which, if we would only receive it, is full of deepest consolation and most effectual incentives to strictness and holiness of life, and a quiet occupying of ourselves with present duties.

Wilfrid was about thirty years of age when he left England to seek consecration at the hands of the French bishops. Agilbert, who had ordained him priest, was at this time bishop of Paris, and Wilfrid naturally had recourse to him. Eleven other bishops assisted at his consecration, which took place at Compiegne ; and, according to the existing ceremonial of the French Church, the new prelate was carried in a golden chair by his brother bishops, singing hymns of joy ; none but bishops being allowed to touch the chair. It does not appear how long Wilfrid remained in France ; for some reason or other he delayed his return for a considerable time. In crossing the sea he and his clergy are described as sitting upon the deck and chanting psalms ; but the voyage was not so favorable as they had expected. When they were midway between the two shores a dreadful storm arose, which cast them on the coast of the South Saxons. The storm was followed by an unusual ebb of the sea, so that the vessel was left high up on the sand. The people came down to seize upon the wreck, and take the prisoners. Wilfrid's band was about one hundred and twenty, very small in comparison of the multitude of the country people : he therefore endeavoured to come to terms with them, promising a considerable ransom if no violence was used. The country people, who were pagans, had with them a priest, who, according to his rites, stood upon a hill, like Balaam, to curse the stran-

gers. While he was in the very act of pronouncing his malediction one of Wilfrid's men slung a stone at him, and killed him on the spot. The idolaters rushed furiously upon the little band ; Wilfrid and his clergy knelt upon the shore to pray, and, through the mercy of God, the people were utterly routed, with the loss of only five men of Wilfrid's party. At the turn of the tide the sea returned to its just limits ; the vessel floated off, and with a favorable wind entered the port of Sandwich.

Meanwhile affairs had been taking a very unhappy turn in the north. Oswy had persons about him who viewed Wilfrid with jealous eyes on account of the active part which he had taken against the Scottish usages, and the fervor of the king's conversion had begun to cool down. It is not improbable that there was mingled with this some jealousy and distrust of Alfrid, whose influence was greater than his father wished it to be : and Alfrid had so completely and energetically identified himself with the Romanizing movement in the Northumbrian Church that he was always sure of a very formidable party. Oswy's feelings were artfully worked upon by some of his courtiers, and at length the prolonged absence of Wilfrid was made a pretext for nominating some one else to his see. St. Chad was the person whom Oswy selected, and he was consecrated by Wine, the bishop of Winchester, assisted by two British bishops. Wilfrid, therefore, on his arrival in the north, found his throne uncanonically occupied by St. Chad. He was not a man likely to relinquish a right for the sake of ease and quietness, when the interests of the Church were concerned ; but he was likewise a Saint : and he doubtless discerned something in the aspect of the times which satisfied him that retirement and self restraint

and patient waiting upon God were clearly duties, however repugnant to the natural activity and practical turn of his mind. Only thirty years of age, and how much of his work already done ! Was it not, indeed, high time for a season of self-seclusion, of secret discipline, of cleansing austerities, of solitary communion with God ? He retired, therefore, to his monastery at Ripon, and gave himself up to the study and acquirement of Christian perfection in the ascetic exercises of a conventional life. It was a pause in his troubled life : there is not much to tell, but there is much to think upon.

It was not till the year 669 that he was restored to his bishopric, but the intervening years were not wholly spent in the secrecy of his monastery. In 659 the Mercians had rebelled against Oswy, who, after the death of Peada, had united Mercia to his own dominions. The Mercians, being successful, raised Wulfere, Penda's second son, to the vacant throne. At the time of his accession Wulfere was a pagan, but soon afterwards became a zealous believer. From his foundation at Stamford, which he, no doubt, visited from time to time, Wilfrid was well known among the Mercians, and as they were at that time without a bishop, Wulfere requested him to exercise his episcopal functions in that country. The holy bishop soon came to have great influence over the king, so that at last he governed almost entirely by Wilfrid's counsels, and, at Wilfrid's request, founded a great number of monasteries in his kingdom. It was probably then that the monastery of Oundle was founded.

During this time the see of Canterbury was vacant. St. Deusdedit died in 664, and in the ensuing year, Oswy, who was at that time the chief English sovereign, joining with Egbert of Kent, chose Wighard for the new archbishop, and sent him to Rome for consecration. There

he died, and from one cause or another, his successor, St. Theodore, did not arrive at Canterbury till the month of May, 669. Many inconveniences of course resulted from the want of an archbishop ; and king Egbert accordingly sent for Wilfrid to ordain clergy and to administer the diocese till the arrival of the new primate. No sooner, however, did he receive notice of the approach of St. Theodore than he left Kent and retired into the north. The treasures which he carried away from Canterbury were characteristic,—two chanters, Eddi and Eona, well skilled in the Roman method of singing, and a band of masons and other artificers for church-building.³ Thus accompanied, he went into Yorkshire, to abide patiently the interference of the new archbishop in the matter of the unjust usurpation of his see. This interference was not long delayed. The same year of his arrival in England, St. Theodore made a general visitation of the island ; and it would appear that he found everything in disorder and confusion, the natural result of neglecting the Roman traditions of St. Gregory and St. Augustine. Of course the humble and holy Chad was deposed, nor was he loth to lay aside the perilous dignity of the episcopate. His consecration was clearly uncanonical, as he had been intruded into another's see ; but, independent of this, there appears to have been something faulty in the manner of it, as we are told that St. Theodore, greatly admiring his humility, determined he should be a bishop in some other see, and perfected his consecration in a catholic

³ Mabillon (xv. 64) says, Wilfrid *then* brought the Rule of St. Benedict from Canterbury, and introduced it into the north. This is plainly inaccurate : Wilfrid brought it from Rome, not from Canterbury, and had already established it to some considerable extent in the north.

way. Wilfrid was thus put in possession of his see, and governed it in laborious peace for nine whole years.

When a man is raised up to do some special work in the world, the idea of it seems completely to master his whole life. It becomes impregnated with the high principle on which he acts, so that every detail of it looks one way, and has one only meaning. It is the aspect which a life of this kind presents to ordinary minds which leads them to call it bigotry, narrowness, and a want of large-heartedness : for the unvarying consistency of a high principle, and the ubiquity of its influence, and its constant appearance in trivial matters where it was not looked for and seems out of place, are little understood by men in general, whose lives are not steered by the light of any one principle at all, but are at the capricious mercy of circumstances rather than in command of them. It has been already shewn at what an early age Wilfrid detected the unsoundness of the Church in the north of England, with what distinctness he perceived that devotion to Rome was the sole remedy for the ailing times, and with what promptness he gave himself up to the cultivation of that feeling in himself, and the propagation of it amongst others. This becomes more and more developed as life goes on. The see of Lindisfarne had become vacant ; he had been preferred to it ; he had been kept out of it by an uncanonical intrusion ; he had been restored by the new primate from Rome. Yet there is not a word of Lindisfarne, though in that holy island he had received his early education ; neither is there a word of any change ; but all at once Wilfrid is bishop, not of Lindisfarne, but of York ! The succession of the Scottish throne is interrupted ; the intervening past is as it were put aside, and Wilfrid succeeds, not to Aidan, and Finan, and Colman, and Tuda,

but to St. Paulinus. Surely the riddle is not hard to find out : such a change in Wilfrid's hands needs no interpretation. Was it foolish and puerile, if he thought anything more of it than as a matter of diocesan convenience ? Anyhow it was wonderfully consistent, and consistency has a great look of principle.

And what is the first thing which we read of the new bishop of York ?—bishop only, for St. Paulinus had carried the pall away ; and great gifts forfeited are not retrieved all at once, lest they should fall a second time into a worse contempt. What is Wilfrid's first act ? The cathedral of St. Paulinus, where St. Edwin was baptized, and which St. Oswald had completed—it had missed its bishops sadly. The foundations had settled, and so the walls had cracked, the rain oozed through the yawning roof, the windows⁴ were unglazed, and birds' nests hung in an unsightly way about the bare mullions, and the pillars and internal walls ran down with green slime or were covered with a growth of dripping moss ; and worse even than this, the furniture of the altar and the vessels for the Blessed Sacrifice were mean, outworn, indecent. The cathedral of York, therefore, was Wilfrid's first care. He restored the walls, leaded the roof, glazed the windows, scraped the pillars, and provided sumptuous garniture for the altar. He gave, moreover, a copy of the four Gospels written in gold letters on a purple ground, and some copies of the Bible adorned with gold and gems. His cæmentarii at Canterbury, and other artificers, went to work first on the cathedral of York ; but they had no easy life of it. When one thing was done, Wilfrid had another ready, and to the

⁴ The windows before were filled with lattices of wood and linen curtains.

masons he might perhaps sometimes seem a little too impatient for a Saint. Next perhaps in dignity, certainly next, if not first, in his affections, was the abbey at Ripon ; the cathedral restored, the abbey was looked to. The church there was perhaps not worth restoring : at any rate a restoration fell far short of the princely design of Wilfrid. From the very foundations he reared an entirely new church, all of wrought stone, a sumptuousness much dwelt upon in those times, as we may see from Bede's praise of the church St. Paulinus built at Lincoln. Indeed Wilfrid was a successor of St. Paulinus in more things than in his bishopric. Round the stone church were raised goodly columns and manifold porches, the wonder of all Yorkshire, and, Wilfrid being the builder, of course it was dedicated under the name of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles and spiritual father of the Roman pontiffs. This was not all at Wilfrid's own expense. Egfrid was then the king of the Northumbrians. On his accession he had found himself involved in two wars, one in the north, with the Picts, and another in the south, with the Mercians. Egfrid was victorious over both his enemies, and by his victory over the Mercians he recovered Lincolnshire, and once more added it to his kingdom. In gratitude for this success, he endowed the abbey of Ripon most liberally, and made large contributions towards the completion of the works then going on.

It was a happy day for Wilfrid, when, in 671,⁵ he celebrated the consecration of St. Peter's minster at Ripon. King Egfrid was there, and king Elfwin, his brother, and a concourse of abbots and magistrates, and a mixed multitude of high and low. Wilfrid preached on the

⁵ Alban Butler fixes it in 670.

occasion, and doubtless put forth to the utmost the extraordinary powers of oratory which we are told he possessed. When the sermon was over, the bishop recited, in the audience of all the people, the gifts of the kings to the abbey of Ripon, a wise precaution as well as a grateful honor ; then followed the rite of consecration, of course after the Roman manner ; no doubt the singing was antiphonal, and conducted by Eddi and Eona : and for three days the bishop, kingly-hearted prelate as he was, entertained the two monarchs with all the splendor of monastic hospitality, which has a heartiness in it beyond all other hospitality, from the self-denial which goes before the feast, and is to follow after. There are still spots in the world where such hospitality is to be met with, and still hearts which are not likely to forget its peculiarly edifying frankness and simplicity.

But sadness is ever nigh to feasting ; this is a moral law which is rarely suspended, for it would hardly be a beneficent miracle if it were. There was sadness nigh to Wilfrid's consecration-feast—bitter herbs, the pilgrim's seasoning. Wilfrid had lived in Wulfere's court ; Wulfere's kingdom had been governed by his counsels. In the heart of many a deep wood, and by the brink of many a quiet river, convent after convent had risen up and down Mercia ; for Wilfrid's wish was Wulfere's rule. In spite then of the munificent thank-offerings which Egfrid's victory brought to the monastery at Ripon, Wilfrid's heart must have bled in secret for the misfortunes of Wulfere ;⁶ and soon after his defeat, that broken-hearted monarch died. Who can trace the in-

⁶ The story that Wilfrid prayed against Wulfere, because he had taken away the monastery at Stamford from the monks of Lindisfarne seems wholly unworthy of credit.

fluence of Wilfrid's counsels, admonitions, examples, spiritual training in that wonderful royal family of Mercia ? What a picture is it to look back upon, a crowd of kinsfolk, a crowd of canonized Saints, Wilfrid, the centre of the group, forming them into Saints ! Surely never was there such a family as that of Wulfere. First, there was the good king himself, sitting at the bishop's feet, and there was Ermenilda, his holy queen, herself a Saint ; and then there was their daughter Wereburga, who governed Trent, and Weedon, and Hamburg, three peaceful convents, and was the patron Saint of Chester. Merwald, her brother, reigned with the pious Ethelred, and he had three fair daughters, Milburga, of Wenloch, and Mildreda, of Menstrey, and Milgitha, and their little brother Merefin, famous for his childish sanctity,—and all these were canonized Saints ; and Etheldreda, and Withburga, and Sexburga, were all their kinsfolk, and Ercongota too, and the abbess of Barking, the blessed Edelburga, and Erconwald, the founder of Chertsey. And the daughters of Penda were five canonized Saints, no less than his granddaughters. And to many readers it would seem weary to tell of Wulfad, and of Ruffin, and of Rumwald, and of Tibba, and of others who were of that one royal stock, and were all Saints honored by the Holy Church. How the grace of God ran over and abounded in that peerless family ! There was much grace, for there was much affliction. Yet though adversity was causing the seed to spring which Wilfrid had sown, he was not a man without a heart of flesh ; for the more the affections are mortified, the more are they quickened ; and there is no love so keen, so delicate, so sensitive, as the love which animates the spare frame of the worn ascetic ; and deeply, very deeply we may be sure did Wilfrid mourn over

the disgrace and death of the kind, and hospitable, and saintly king of Mercia.

Still, with many griefs of heart, with many outward thwartings, he went on his way, toiling ; he kept to his work and his labor till the evening, and the evening was yet far off.

But we have not done with the cæmentarii and other artificers from Canterbury. The Minster at Ripon is finished and consecrated, and Wilfrid now moves his workmen northward. From the banks of the dashing Ure, and the woody margin of the dark-watered Nid, the bishop of York travelled to the forked valley of the romantic Tyne; and some little below the spot where the two branches of the river meet, where the town of Hexham stands, the “magnifical” work of church-building again commenced. Here St. Oswald’s great battle had been fought, and his great victory won : here was his Hevenfeld, and here his wonder-working cross of perishable wood. In all the romantic north, scarce one valley can compete with the double vale of the north and south Tyne : modern science has now cloven its way through the hanging cliff, and the crumbling bank, and the branching wood, and over the tortuous, oft-encountered stream, so that its once secluded beauties of wood, rock, and water are now open to all. And there St. Wilfrid reared the abbey of St. Andrew. Eddi, the precentor, was lost in wonder. Who ever saw foundations sunk so deep as these ? What blind feeling impelled the holy architect, at all costs, to come to solid rock ? What a fancy was this of his ! Still he dug, and the trenches went on deepening and broadening till they were yawning chasms, and in them the princely bishop sunk, where man’s eye could not see them — it was God’s glory *he* sought, not man’s praise — deep in those trenches foun-

dation stones ‘mirifically’ wrought. His columns and his porches, which he loved so much, they were even more wonderful at Hexham than they had been at Ripon. And the height and the length of the nave and aisles, people wondered at that too ; and at the secrerries of the triforium still more ; but it was the bishop’s design ; he felt, as others may feel, their hearts grow large in the dim vastness of our catholic temples. And the winding ways upwards and downwards, Eddi declares that the littleness of his style must not attempt to describe them ; for he saw that the bishop was inspired, like Bezaleel of old, for all agreed that on our side of the Alps was there no church like this new minster of Wilfrid’s building. All honor, therefore, be to the blessed memory of him, who in those dark old times took heart and built St. Andrew’s in the beautiful valley of the Tyne !

Alas ! in these modern days we measure all men by our own contractedness. We do not allow men to be able to do more than one work, or to have more than one virtue. One half of religion keeps the other half in check. We leave one thing undone lest it should lead us to neglect another. Mary chides Martha, and Martha disturbs Mary ; we are not practical, for we cannot be so unless we are contemplative, and we dare not be contemplative lest we should deprecate the importance of being practical. We dare not love God, lest it should wean us from equable love of our neighbour, and so we concentre all our love upon ourselves, the sorriest of all unamiable things. Now, some may think St. Wilfrid did nothing but build material churches, and therefore that he was but an indifferent bishop. It would be a great thing if all bishops did so much as build material churches, for many do much less than even that. But a man would build very poor churches if he

did not do many other and greater things beside. There is a living Church in England now, which we trust is something more than a material church. It were sad if it were not ; for it has weathered many a storm, and ridden through some frightful gales, and well nigh gone to pieces on some terrific rocks. It would have gone to pieces if it had been nothing more than a material church. It is to be hoped it may prove a safe shelter in some very wild weather yet. Well, St. Wilfrid was one of the master builders of this same Church of ours. Ripon stands, and Hexham stands, and the Church of living stones stands too : they stand, and that is something, though they are all in a crazy state, and want new Wilfrids to them.

But what else did Wilfrid do ? He preached : he went about preaching perpetually, and the visitation of that huge diocese was no light thing in the seventh century ; it is not a light thing now, when the great palatinate of Durham has been severed from it, and the modern diocese of Ripon ; but it was a very different thing in those days, as different as a monk is from a poor soft secular. However, the bishops then were mostly monks, and their vocation carried them cheerily through a great deal of rough living. He was an eloquent preacher too, yet precise in his language, and plain in his style ; just such a preacher as St. Alfonso Liguori would have delighted in. Nay, so much did Wilfrid think of preaching—for it was safer to exalt it then than it would be now, when the christian sacraments are disesteemed—that when he signed the charter of Peterborough (if that document is not a forgery) he subscribed it thus, “ I, Wilfrid, the priest, the servant of the Churches, and carrier of the Gospel among the nations.” We are told that heat and cold, wind and wet, the

rugged roads and flooded rivers, were all as nothing to him, so perseveringly did he go up and down preaching the word. And what bishop is there with anything apostolic about him, who does not set a special value on that prerogative of his order, the conferring the sacrament of Confirmation ? All the Saints have been lovers of little children : not to mention other instances, how wonderfully St. Philip Neri yearned towards them ! The love of little children was, so to speak, one of the touching characteristics of our blessed Lord's human life. He can be touched in His little ones : should not the Saints, then, love to be their ministers ? And when Confirmation is put off, as it often is, till the end of childhood and the beginning of boyhood, what a touching solemnity it is ! Just when our three great enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, might league with our own perverse will to rifle the treasure of Baptism, this other sacrament steps in and seals it up again. At the very season when danger comes nigh at hand,—when the soul, yet weak, and somewhat, it may be, burthened with its untried and unaccustomed armour, is surrounded by the powers of darkness, the Church intervenes with this powerful sacrament, setting the seal of the Holy Spirit to the great baptismal gift which was in jeopardy. Alas ! the purity of Baptism is too often polluted and obscured, as it is : but how much oftener would it be lost, how much oftener would the soul fall utterly from that illuminating grace, if it were not for the gift of Confirmation ! Consider how little most boys think of religion ; indeed, they appear to think much less of it than children. There seems less that is good, less that is divine, less that is honorable, less that is hopeful about boys than any other members of Christ's Church. It is an age which painfully tries the faith of parents, friends, and guardians.

The love of church, and prayer, and the Bible, and the interest in death, funerals, and all softening and sacred things, which children often have, delighting their parents' hearts, seem to pass away or be clouded over in boyhood by self-will and nascent impurity. There is a negligence of thought, a hardening of the heart, a restlessness of the soul, a deplorable worship of self, most odious and depressing to christian parents, and calling forth all their faith in the inestimable preciousness of Holy Baptism. So far as religion goes they seem to make no way with their children in boyhood. It appears that all they can do is to keep ploughing, and harrowing, and sowing, and watering a hard rock, in faith that God will make a harvest grow there some time, because He has promised to do so. To keep a *boy* from going wrong seems almost the nearest approach we can make towards persuading him to do right. Of course there are exceptions to this, exceptions which the special grace of God makes, exceptions not infrequent in young persons whose constitutions are enfeebled by some growing disease, and from whom, in merciful despite of themselves, the gay world is consequently kept at arms' length. There are exceptions, too, by God's mercy, in persons in whose constitutions there are the seeds of disease not yet developed, or who are intended in the mystery of the Divine Providence to die early. Indeed, we scarcely ever see a very pious boy without a half-thought coming into our minds that he will die soon ; as people are in the habit of saying quite proverbially, "He is too good to live :" the world, man's poor nature, bearing strange instinctive witness against itself. Yet, with the general run of men, boyhood is as has been described ; and being then so unsatisfactory a time, so distressingly irreligious an age, such a selfish barren-hearted season, it seems a mer-

ciful thing that the Holy Church should be allowed to interpose here with her sacrament of Confirmation, a fresh pledge of God's goodness, a sign of the reality of Baptism, a witness that there is good seed in the soul which must be taken care of, although there does not appear any promise of its springing yet.

What bishop, then, will not feel his deepest affections called out by the sacrament of Confirmation? Wilfrid's Confirmations seem to have formed an integral part of his preaching, for there is no ordinance so intimately connected with preaching as this. St. Augustine says, "This is to preach the Gospel, not only to teach those things which are to be said of Christ, but those also which are to be observed by every one who desires to be confederated into the society of the body of Christ,"⁷ that is, as Bishop Taylor comments, "not only the doctrines of good life, but the mysteries of godliness, and the rituals of religion, which issue from a Divine fountain, are to be declared by him who would *fully* preach the Gospel." Even since the Reformation—if it is not almost irreverent to compare our times with those of unity—we read of a certain bishop of Chester, who, going into his diocese, where Confirmation had been long neglected, found the multitudes who thronged to that sacrament so numerous that even the churchyards would not hold them, and he was obliged to confirm in the fields, and would have been trodden to death by the throng if he had not been rescued by the magistrates.⁸ And St. Bernard, in his Life of St. Malachi, bishop of Down and

⁷ De Fid. et Op. ix. "Hoc enim est evangelizare Christum, non tantum docere ea quæ sunt dicenda de Christo, sed etiam quæ observanda ei, qui accedit ad compagem corporis Christi."—The narrow view of preaching taken in these days is nigh to very fearful heresy.

⁸ Vindic. Eccles. Hierarch. per Franc. Hallier, ap. Taylor. xi. 231.

Connor, lauds his especial zeal in reviving the holy rite of Confirmation. Such seems to have been the conduct of Wilfrid: and crowds are described as seeking the chrism and imposition of hands from him, while the indefatigable bishop catechized them all with loving patience. Surely this was building up the living Church with invisible materials; and the winding ways of the blessed Saint's influence were more wonderful far than those of Hexham Abbey, which Eddi the precentor so much admired.

It was during one of his circuits through the country villages for the purpose of preaching and confirming, that God was pleased to set His seal to the sanctity of His servant Wilfrid by a visible miracle. In the village of Tiddafrey crowds pressed upon him to receive the unction of the holy chrism at his hands. During the rite a poor woman was seen forcing her way through the dense throng, with the demeanor of one in deepest trouble and vexation of spirit. She was bearing her child in her arms to be confirmed; the child's face was covered, says Matthew of Westminster, and the mother pretended she wished to have the boy catechized. But, in fact, the child was dead, and there was that within the mother's heart which told her that Wilfrid could raise him to life again. The bishop, uncovering the boy's face, perceived that he was dead; and he stood amazed and troubled at the sight, perhaps thinking the child had died recently, and without the mother being aware. But she, perceiving the bishop's hesitation, pressed upon him, and with her words interrupted by frequent sobs, she said, "See, my good lord, I had resolved to carry my boy to you to be confirmed in Christ, and now I bring him, not to be confirmed only, but to be raised to life again. You preach Christ the Almighty;

prove your preaching by your works, and raise my only begotten from death. Surely it is no great thing that I ask of His Omnipotence." Thus saying, she gave herself up to all the violence of grief, and the people lifted up their voices in lamentable concert with her. The bishop, too, began to weep, and to recite some psalms in a low voice, and then he prayed, "O Father, look, I beseech Thee, not at my merits, but at Thine own merciful doings, and console this woman in her grief, and give her back her child, through Jesus Christ Thine only-begotten Son." Then rising from his knees, he laid his right hand upon the child, who began to stir, and in a short time stood up in perfect health and strength. Wilfrid then gave him to his mother for seven years, claiming him for the service of God when that term was expired. The boy's name was Ethelwald ; and when the seven years were over, his mother gave him up with an unwilling heart. He became a monk at Ripon, and ultimately died of the pestilence.

This was not the only miracle which the bishop wrought about this time. While Hexham Abbey was building, one of Wilfrid's favorite cæmentarii from Canterbury fell from a lofty scaffold. The bishop was not present, but knew in his spirit what had happened, and beginning to lament, desired those who were with him to intercede for the unhappy man, and all, straightway rising up in wonder, went to the place where the dead man lay. No sooner had Wilfrid touched the body, than life returned, and the limbs were restored sound and whole.

One of Wilfrid's chief cares, a natural one in a great church-builder, was to beautify the service of the sanctuary, and to provide that the functions of the Church should be performed with reverent splendor and magnificent solemnity. And this too is part of preaching,

surely no little part. What hope is there of people in whom the spirit of sacred timidity, of awe for unseen things, does not exist? It is not often that the heart is really at prayer when there is not a lowness of corporal attitude. Without the help of our body and the admonition of its dejected postures, it is rare indeed to realize the Presence of God even in public worship. And then, too, what a consolation is it, in countries where the churches stand open well-nigh all the day, for the poor to leave their squalid dwellings, their bare, unfurnished, fireless room, and go to kneel amid the gold, and the lights, and the color, and the incensé, and the gleaming altars and the vast naves, and the thrilling organs of the churches, where all is, so to speak, their own,—no pews, no jealous distinctions; such churches are obviously, what they really are inwardly, the homes of the poor,—not the poor, miserable, untruthful, weekly pageant, waiting on the rich to soothe consciences which want wounding, while the pauper, the lame, the blind, the deaf, are thrust far off till all who can pay for seats are satisfied, and close themselves up in comfortable division from the scaring sight of poverty, disease, and filth. The man who built the wonderful abbey at Hexham would naturally take pains with the performance of the public ritual of the Church. Yet his adorning was of a solemn sort. With the help of Eddi and Eona, he introduced the plain chant all over the north, till Yorkshire was full of poor peasants singing David's psalms in the grave sweetness of the Gregorian tones.

But Wilfrid felt that there were few parts of a bishop's office so important as a strict vigilance over the monastic orders. Monastic orders are the very life's blood of a Church, monuments of true apostolic christianity, the

refuges of spirituality in the worst times, the nurseries of heroic bishops, the mothers of rough-handed and great-hearted missionaries. A Church without monasteries is a body with its right arm paralyzed. All this Wilfrid knew full well, as well as we know it even with all our additional experience and melancholy convictions. So Dunstan felt, and so the blessed Ethelwold, both in their day, and so, far off from them, felt St. Alfonso, in his little Neapolitan diocese, and so Wilfrid felt, and took the matter strenuously in hand. He it was, as we have already seen, who introduced the Benedictine Rule into the northern shires of England ; and that young man who left him at Lyons—we may remember how Eddi spoke of Paul and Barnabas—his name should never be disjoined from that of Wilfrid when this great work is mentioned ; for St. Benedict Biscop can hardly be said to have carried on St. Wilfrid's work, but to have worked alongside of him, though apart. Providence seems to have raised them both up at once to do one and the same work all the more effectually, because they wrought independently. Indeed, there appears something like a law in this. There is rarely, if ever, any movement in the Church which is single ; the movement seems to start from several points almost simultaneously. It is as though a spirit were resident in the whole body, greater far than the bent of an individual mind, or the contagious influences of party. The impulse is too general, or at least too extensive for such things to be an adequate account of it. The actuating spirit of the Church finds contemporary vents, sometimes close by each other, yet never coming into contact, or again, far off out of sight and hearing, yet with a uniform and consistent expression of the same inward want, and harmoniously prophetic of the same coming change. Perhaps

this may be, to such as will receive it, a sufficiently consoling token of a Divine Presence, and therefore a hidden support to those called upon to co-operate in any religious movement, through weariness and calumny, thwarting and apparent failure. As in Mercia, under Wulfere's government, Wilfrid had bestowed especial pains upon the monasteries, so did he now in his northern diocese. Yet Mercia was not forgotten. It was by his counsel, in 677, that St. Etheldreda rebuilt the abbey of St. Peter at Ely, for which her brother Aldulph, the king of the East Angles, supplied the funds. Indeed, Wilfrid's influence penetrated everywhere. Abbots and abbesses voluntarily surrendered the government of their monasteries to him, while princes and nobles delivered their sons to him to be educated under his eye ; and it is stated, that the pious parents took no umbrage at the result which so often happened—the youths declaring their determination to take the monastic habit, when their parents, at the proper age, proposed their entering the royal armies.

What a man of untiring energy Wilfrid must have been ! Yet, under all this pressure of external business, this many-sided care of the Churches, he sanctified himself with ascetic diligence. He knew full well that a life of practical activity, unless perpetually quickened by retirement and invigorated by that closeness to God which secret contemplation attains, becomes mere dissipation of spiritual strength, mere uneasy inconsistent benevolence, and degrades the self-denial of charity to our neighbour, into the mere half mental, half animal need of being busied about many things. He watched over his chastity as his main treasure, and was by an unusual grace preserved from pollution ; and to this end he chiefly mortified his thirst, and even in the heats of

summer and during his long pedestrian visitations, he drank only a little phial of liquid daily. So through the day he kept down evil thoughts, and when night came on, to tame nature and to intimidate the dark angels, no matter how cold the winter, he washed his body all over with holy-water, till this great austerity was forbidden him by Pope John. Thus, year after year, never desisting from his vigilance, did Wilfrid keep his virginity to the Lord. In vigil and in prayer, says Eddi the precentor, in reading and in fasting, who was ever like to him ? Such was the private life of that busy bishop : so words sum up years, and cannot be realized unless they are dwelt upon, any more than that eternity by which they are repaid.

A bishop of York traversing his huge diocese on foot ! Surely this in itself was preaching the Gospel. Fasting and footsore, shivering in the winter's cold, yet bathing himself in chilly water when he came to his resting-place at night ; fainting beneath the sun of midsummer, yet almost grudging to himself the little phial of liquid ; preaching in market-place, or on village green, or some central field amid a cluster of Saxon farms, behold the bishop of York move about those northern shires. He was not a peer of Parliament, he had no fine linen, no purple save at a Lenten mass, no glittering equipage, no liveried retainers : would it then be possible for those rude men of the north to respect him ? Yes ; in their rude way : they had faith, and haply they bowed more readily before him in that poor monkish guise than if he had played the palatine amongst them. Surely if we have half a heart we can put before our eyes as if it were a reality, Wilfrid on foot, Wilfrid preaching, Wilfrid confirming, Wilfrid sitting on a wrought stone watching his cæmentarii, as Dante sat upon his stone

and watched the superb duomo of Florence rise like an enchanted thing; Wilfrid listening to a new and awkward choir trying the Gregorian tones and keeping his patience even when Eddi and Eona lost theirs, Wilfrid marching at the head of his clergy up the new aisles of Ripon, Wilfrid receiving the confession of St. Etheldreda, and what was the fountain of all, Wilfrid kneeling with the pope's hands resting on his head and the archdeacon Boniface standing by. But we must think of another thing also,—Wilfrid riding, riding up and down his diocese : for this walking of Wilfrid's did not quite please St. Theodore ; not that it was too simple, but that it was too austere, and the life of such a man needed husbanding for the Church's sake. Would that St. Theodore had always thought so ! but he was a simple man as well as a wise one, and he too, strange that it should be so, mistook Wilfrid, knew not what he was, and so lost him for a while. However, at this time he thought nothing but what was true and good of Wilfrid, and he insisted — for he was archbishop of Canterbury—that his brother of York, who was but a bishop then, should have a horse to ride on during his longer journeys and more distant visitations. He knew this luxury pained Wilfrid ; so he made it up to him in the best way he could, for, to shew his veneration for the Saint, he insisted upon lifting him upon horseback whenever he was near him to do so. It would have been well for England if archbishops of Canterbury had always been of such a mind towards those who filled the throne of York. However, we now behold Wilfrid making his visitations on horseback ; for obedience is a greater thing to a Saint than even his much-loved austerities. Taking a hardship away from a Saint is like depriving a mother of one of her children, yet for

holy obedience sake, or the edification of a neighbour, a Saint will postpone even a hardship. Now, then, by the Ure and by the Nid, by the holly-spotted commons of the Wharf and the then pastoral margin of the Aire, by the rocky Tees, and the blue Ganlesse, and the gravelly Weare, in the valley of the two sweet Tynes, and by the border brooks that flow within sight of the towers of Coldingham, Wilfrid follows the sheeptracks on horseback, and so visits his beautiful diocese of York. A word here and a word there, a benediction and a prayer, the signed cross and the holy look, a confession heard, and a mass said, and a sermon preached, and that endless accompaniment of Gregorian tones ; verily the Gospel went out from him as he rode.

And was this fair heaven to be overcast ? Were these days to have an end ere death had come to force men to a compulsory contentment in the ending of all good things?—for that death's law is universal, and cannot be evaded. Yes, it was even so : the nine years came to an end. The devil was not envious only ; he was dismayed also : for Wilfrid was obviously narrowing the bounds of his kingdom through the potent Cross of Jesus Christ, our Lord and God. There were abundant materials at hand for interrupting this fair Christian work in its hopeful progress.

It cannot be denied that the aspect of Church history is, on the first view of it, peculiarly discouraging ; and those who take but a superficial glance at it, may easily be led into that most immoral of all infidelities—a disbelief in the existence of human virtue and of high motives. For the great majority of holy plans which the Saints have projected, have come to nought before half the harvest has been reaped ; as though the best men, the choice specimens of our regenerate nature, had

not had sufficient continuity of impulse or generous perseverance to reach their own good ends. The fervor of Orders has been often but a fever, and decay has not even waited till the first founder was in his tomb before its melancholy manifestation began. Men see this ; it is painful to reflect twice upon it, and hence they have spoken of the blessed Saints in a style of disparaging apology, as of men not practical, or wise, or persevering, or consistent, but creatures of unregulated impulse, with now and then a grotesque heroism of their own. To others, again, it has appeared as though it was hopeless to try to do the world good, because in this world good has been a perpetual failure ; virtue among men has been but as a gathered flower in a hot hand, out of its place, fading during that short while in which it seems to live : and these teach a disheartening wisdom, a selfish mediocrity ; and they have so much truth on their side, that they deceive many. Virtue is but a gathered flower, and if we measure the good or ill success of it by our nearness to or remoteness from our self-appointed ends, truly good *has* been a constant failure : but, in sooth, our best, most tranquillizing knowledge is that we are blind-fold workers doing the Will of God. But there is another consolation which we may fairly take to ourselves, notwithstanding that it has something very awful about it. It is not only that good men fail in good things for want of wisdom and perseverance, or for lack of better materials to work upon than the mixed multitude of nominal believers ; but, as is obviously manifested in the case of St. Wilfrid, there is a third baffling, thwarting influence, which is no less than the permitted agency of Satan. By this, if it so please God, a man may be beaten, and yet be blameless : and though it were a very unsafe thing to set up the cry of

Satan wheresoever we hear of sin, even among the Saints, yet there are manifestations which cannot be mistaken ; and inasmuch as his agency is undeniable, a man must ever add it in his thoughts to the weakness of the Saints and the vileness of the multitude, when he reads Church history ; and it is not so enfeebling a thing to be afraid of malignant power, as to be disheartened by our own guilty infirmities. It does not appear that Satan found anything in Wilfrid's life out of which to weave his web ; but he found elsewhere an almost embarrassing abundance of materials.

Oswy died in 670, and at that time Alfrid, the eldest son (as some say) was in Ireland, and the succession to the Saxon thrones of those days was so precarious, that absence was enough to make a man miss his crown. Others say that Egfrid was really Oswy's eldest son, and that, though Alfrid had had the most influence during his father's lifetime, the people forced him to leave Egfrid in quiet possession of his hereditary right. Under any circumstances, Wilfrid's intimate connection with Alfrid would be rather an objection to him in the eyes of Egfrid, or might be made so by the dexterous insinuations of persons hostile to the bishop. Then again, as has been already intimated, Wilfrid's friendship with Wulfere, the Mercian king, and his kind of ecclesiastical alliance with the political enemies of the Northumbrian kingdom, were manifestly open to much and easy misrepresentation. Again, we are told that the deference paid to him by the abbots of remote monasteries, and the influence he was gaining among the nobles by educating their children, also created much envy and dislike. Besides, a holy man must needs have many enemies ; and Wilfrid was a bishop, and had patronage to bestow, and would certainly not be-

stow it on unworthy candidates, whoever their supporters might be; and he had discipline to enforce, and he was the last man to calculate consequences when duty was clear. Food, therefore, there was for envy in almost unusual abundance, and it was artfully nourished, till it was too much for the peace or the power of Wilfrid.

But we must say a word on Oswy's death. He had taken a decided part in favor of the Roman usages at the Council of Whitby ; it would appear that he afterwards returned to his former preference for the Scottish customs. It was, however, only for a while: when St. Theodore restored Wilfrid to his see, the king's reconciliation to him seems to have been hearty. As he grew older, and witnessed more and more the great work Wilfrid was doing, his reverence for Rome increased, and at length he became so affectionately desirous to visit that holy city, and be instructed there in the ways of Christian perfection, that he was preparing to lay aside his crown and go in pilgrimage to Rome, and die there amid the holy places. He chose Wilfrid as his conductor, and promised him a kingly donation as a recompense. Wilfrid hardly needed an inducement to take him to his beloved Rome ; but those Canterbury cæmentarii of his afforded him opportunities of spending money, such as his princely heart delighted in. The vision of the many-steepled hills of Rome was, however, but momentary—a cloud-city in the sunset. Death came, and Oswy entered into the heavenly Jerusalem ; better, unspeakably better, than terrestrial Rome. Yet Rome was not far off from Wilfrid ; he was soon to enter its blessed gates, but in other guise than that of the honored conductor of a pilgrim king.

Meanwhile the building of Hexham Abbey was going on, and another accident was the occasion of a second miracle which Wilfrid wrought. As before he had restored to life one of the masons when quite dead, so now it was a young monk, with mangled limbs, and life still in him, who received his restoration from God through Wilfrid's sanctity. Indeed, he was but a boy, perhaps a novice only ; and he fell from a great height upon the stone pavement below. Both his legs and arms were fractured, and his whole body so bruised and broken, that he seemed at the point of death. The bishop appears, from the narrative, to have been a witness of the accident; and bursting into tears, he desired the masons to lay the sufferer on a bier, and carry him out of the building. Then collecting the brethren round him, he made a sign that they should all pray that, as Eutychus had been given to the prayers of Paul, so their young brother should now be restored to their prayers. When the prayers were ended, Wilfrid blessed the boy, who seemed at the last gasp, and bade the leeches bind up the fractures in faith, and, contrary to all expectation, he recovered, but winning his strength gradually ;—a cure not the less miraculous for that it was gradual, and that human means were called in ; which may be observed in the case of some of our Blessed Lord's own miracles, the patterns of the wonders wrought by His Saints ; though, indeed, it must not be forgotten that He is ascended now, and that He said His followers in time to come should do greater works than those of His.

But while Wilfrid was working miracles and preaching, building churches and visiting his diocese, and under the pressure of all these apostolic labors, was with great austerities keeping his body under and

bringing it into subjection, lest he himself should be a castaway, the devil was conspiring against him, and envy making its work perfect. The chief occasion of Wilfrid's second troubles, was his connection with another of our famous English Saints, the blessed Etheldreda, "twice a widow, yet always a maid." What a freshness is there in the edifying history of those times when Saint intersected Saint as they moved in their appointed orbits ! Wonderful times to look back upon, very wonderful ; yet, when that Past was the Present, haply it did not seem so all unlike the Present now. Let us hope this for our own sakes, if only we be not lifted up too much by such a thought. Surely it is not a slight grace to be the children of those multitudinous stars which shone in our ancient Church in those days of her first espousals. May God be praised evermore for that He gave us our Saxon Saints.

Perhaps there are few Saints more intimately connected than Wilfrid was with the sacred history of his country,—of his times, we were going to say ; but it were sad to think *any* times should come when that history should not be equally instructive and equally interesting to the Christian dwellers on this island. It was mainly through Wilfrid's attestation that the Church came to know of the perpetual virginity of St. Etheldreda ;⁹ and some little of her history must be related here, to clear up what is rather intricate in Wilfrid's life. St. Etheldreda was married to Egfrid in 660 or thereabouts, and desired to live with him a life

⁹ It would appear from a passage in Camden that there was something miraculous about this : but really in these days one shrinks even from holy relations, lest men should find room for gibes and impure sarcasms, where our forefathers reverenced the beautiful majesty of chasteness.

of continence. The prince felt a scruple in denying this request ; but after some time had elapsed, seeing the reverence which St. Etheldreda had for Wilfrid, to whom she had given the land for his abbey at Hexham, Egfrid determined to use the bishop's influence in persuading the holy virgin to forego her purpose. He offered Wilfrid large presents in land and money, if he should succeed. How far Wilfrid dissembled with the king, or whether he dissembled at all, we cannot now ascertain : that he practised concealment is clear, and doubtless he thought it a duty in such a matter, and doubtless he was right : it would be presumptuous to apologize for his conduct ; he is a canonized Saint in the Catholic Church. Of course, it is not pretended that the lives of the Saints do not afford us warnings by their infirmities, as well as examples by their graces. Only, where a matter is doubtful, it would be surely an *awful* pride not to speak reverently of those whom the discernment of the Church has canonized. The way in which the Fathers treat of the failings of the blessed Patriarchs should be our model. However, the probable account of the matter, and the one which best unites the various narratives, is this : Wilfrid, at her husband's desire, did lay before St. Etheldreda what Egfrid required ; at the same time pointing out to her that obedience in such a matter was a clear duty, which nothing could supersede but a well-ascertained vocation from God. St. Etheldreda, it would appear, satisfied the bishop on this very point ; and then his duty was at once shifted. So far from urging her to comply with her husband's desires, he did all he could to strengthen her in her chaste resolve, and to render her obedient to the heavenly calling. Of course we may anticipate the sort of objections which would

be raised in these days to her conduct as a wife, and to her marrying Egfrid at all. But her defence belongs to her own life, not to Wilfrid's : our business here is simply a connected narrative of Wilfrid's share in the matter. In 671, through Wilfrid's influence, the king reluctantly gave way to Etheldreda's often expressed wish to retire into a monastery ; but from that moment his heart was changed towards Wilfrid. Soon after Egfrid repented of this consent, and sent to take her from the monastery of Coldingham, to which she had retired. By the advice of St. Ebba, the abbess, Etheldreda fled, and was preserved on a mountain by a very extraordinary miracle : and in 673 she founded her monastery at Ely, and received the benediction as abbess from Wilfrid himself. This was the great grievance which Egfrid had against Wilfrid ; and though he dissembled his hatred for the present, yet we are told by Thomas, the monk of Ely, and biographer of St. Etheldreda, that Wilfrid's ruin was now determined upon.¹

Meanwhile king Egfrid married again ; for it would appear that a regular divorce had taken place between St. Etheldreda and himself. His new queen was a very different person from the blessed Etheldreda, and

¹ Father Cressy attacks the Magdeburg centuriators for mentioning St. Wilfrid's conduct about St. Etheldreda as being the main cause of his banishment, because, he says, no mention is made of it in the subsequent disputes. Doubtless the centuriators meant that it was the real though remote cause, as being the beginning of Egfrid's hatred : and this is surely true. But Cressy's accuracy cannot be depended upon : he assigns two different deaths to a king of the Mercians within a very few pages. The centuriators certainly tell St. Etheldreda's story in their own way ; but when they have done their best, one does not see what they have gained towards a justification of the sacrilegious concubinage of the infamous Luther.

her power to do mischief was not long in making itself felt. Ermenburga is described as being haughty and vindictive, and the stern, uncompromising Wilfrid came athwart both her evil passions. Through the piety of Oswy and his nobles, the churches throughout Wilfrid's immense diocese had been most richly provided with furniture for the altars, and vessels for the blessed Sacrifice. Many were of gold, none of a viler metal than silver, and copes, and chasubles, and maniples, were embroidered in the most costly way. Now, meanness generally lies alongside of haughtiness, and so Ermensburga began to cast a covetous eye upon these treasures of the sanctuary. When she saw how the good bishop was courted by high and low, how the nobles sought to him for counsel, how a court of abbots did obeisance to him, how the sons of princes and peers stood round him proud to serve in such a service, Ermensburga's pride was inflamed beyond measure. There was more of kingly seeming gathered round that mitred ascetic at Ripon, than round her royal husband, wherever his court might be. Was anything more wanted to deepen her hatred for the holy man? A keener grief, if it were possible, was yet to be added to her covetousness and pride. Her deportment was not such as became a queen, and Wilfrid told her so. He rebuked her for her levity, and Wilfrid's rebukes were not likely to be less severe and plain than is called for by wickedness in high places. The indignant queen could now hardly contain herself, and going into Egfrid's presence she taunted him with being but the second man in his kingdom. "Look at his riches," said she; "look at his retainers of high birth, his gorgeous vestments, his jewelled plate, his multitude of obedient monasteries, the towers and spires and swell-

ing roofs of all his stately buildings; why, your kingdom is but his bishopric." Ermenburga was like the world: to the world's eye this was what a churchman looked like in Catholic ages: yet the world's eye sees untruly. The gorgeous vestments, the jewelled plate—these are in the Church of God, the sanctuary of the pious poor: outside of that is the hair-shirt, and then the iron girdles, and the secret spikes corroding the flesh, and the long weals of the heavy discipline, and the horny knees, and the craving thirst, and the gnawing hunger, and the stone pillow, and the cold vigil. Yet does the world exaggerate the Churchman's power? Nay, it cannot take half its altitude; his power is immeasurably greater: but it does not reside, not a whit of it, in the vestments or the plate, in the lordly ministers or the monkish chivalry, but in the mystery of all that apparel of mortification just enumerated, that broken will and poverty of spirit to which earth is given as a present possession, no less than Heaven pledged as a future heritage. The Church is a kingdom, and ascetics are veritable kings.

But the devil gives wisdom to his servants, wisdom of his own kind. Egfrid and Ermensburga did not attempt alone the dangerous and invidious task of expelling the Saint from his diocese. They went to work with deepest sagacity. In 673, St. Theodore held a synod at Thetford;² Wilfrid attended only by his proxies, and it has been conjectured³ that his reason for not attending, was his suspicion that the archbishop would attempt to carry some decree to his prejudice. Now St. Theodore had set his heart upon dividing the

² Hertford, some say.

³ By Mr. Peck. Hist. of Stamford, Book ii. p. 26.

great English sees, and multiplying the number of bishops. A very good object it was, yet the holy man shewed some little want of faith, and, alas ! a very great want of justice, in the manner of carrying out his plan. In fact, we may as well say at once, that, turn the history which way we will, we cannot make out even a shadow of an apology for St. Theodore, except what is, after all, the best apology, his subsequent undisguised repentance and earnest seeking for reconciliation with Wilfrid. Of the ten chapters or decrees of the Synod of Thetford, we need make no mention, except of the ninth, which, in St. Theodore's own words, ran thus,—That as the faithful increase, more bishops be made; *but on this article, for the present we concluded nothing.* It is clear, therefore, that the Synod of Thetford gave the primate no power to divide sees ; and if St. Theodore conceived that his legatine authority enabled him to do this, then it was surely something like an unworthy subterfuge to bring the matter into discussion at all at Thetford. And, moreover, the Holy See would be most unlikely, from its known moderation and reverence for the ancient canons, to permit the division of bishoprics, and the intrusion of new bishops against the will of the existing prelates. Under any circumstances, Theodore could not divide Wilfrid's diocese *canonically*, except with Wilfrid's assent, which he did not even ask.

But Egfrid knew how strongly the archbishop of Canterbury felt upon this subject. Soon after the Synod of Thetford, Bisi, the bishop of the East Angles, had become hopelessly infirm ; and Theodore, instead of consecrating one coadjutor, appointed two, dividing the old diocese into the two new ones of Dunwich and North Elmham. The Northumbrian king, therefore,

under pretext of zeal for the Church, represented to St. Theodore, that the diocese of York was too unwieldy to be adequately governed by one bishop, and at the same time so rich that it could easily support three. Together with this representation, Egfrid sent grievous complaints of Wilfrid's pride, tyranny, and luxury, and (though we are ashamed to add what truth requires) promised ample gifts to the archbishop if he would depose Wilfrid. Theodore, as he journeyed to England, had spent some time with bishop Agilbert at Paris, and had asked of him information and advice respecting the English Church : Agilbert was the consecrator of Wilfrid, had ordained him priest, and made him spokesman at the Council of Whitby ; surely what he said of Wilfrid might have given Theodore great confidence in the man of God. Theodore had deposed St. Chad on Wilfrid's behalf, and he had interfered with Wilfrid's austerities with an affectionate peremptoriness, and made him ride on horseback, and taken a meek pride in lifting the bishop of York upon his horse : would he not require uncommon proof of Wilfrid's pride and luxury and tyranny ? Alas, for St. Theodore ! Like many other men, he had ascertained to himself the goodness and the greatness of a favorite end, the division of the bishoprics ; he had some reason to know that Wilfrid would object to the parcelling out of his hard-won diocese of York, and so —he fell. It was not the presents which tempted him ; no, Theodore's whole life will never allow such an accusation to be credible ; it was his impatience to carry out his favorite scheme of Church reform, which drew the holy primate into Egfrid's base and cunning snare.

Perhaps it is only just to St. Theodore to state his plan of reform, and shew how needful it was ; and this

we cannot do better than by borrowing the words of a modern historian :⁴

"The extensive authority which pope St. Gregory conferred on Augustine appears to have been personal : it was not exercised, perhaps not claimed, by his immediate successors. But when, in 654, pope Vitalian elevated Theodore of Cilicia to the dignity vacant by the death of Deusdedit, the sixth archbishop, the same jurisdiction was revived in favour of the new primate. Theodore was a man of severe morals, and of great learning ; but the consideration which, above all, led to his choice, was his extensive acquaintance with the canons, and his unbending firmness. By all the Saxon prelates, he was recognized as the head of the English Church. But after his death, and under his immediate successors, some of these prelates aspired to independence. The first was Egbert of York, brother to the king of Northumbria, who appealed to the Pope for the restoration of the archiepiscopal honours of his see,—honours which, as we have before intimated, were reserved to it by the decree of St. Gregory the Great. The disasters of which Northumbria had been the theatre by the frequent invasions of the Pagans, and the partial apostacy of the province, had doubtless forfeited the metropolitan character of York ; we may add, that it could have had no suffragans beyond the fleeting prelates of Hexham, and the remote ones of Lindisfarne. But now that tranquillity was for a season restored, and that there appeared an opening for the erection of new sees, a papal decree severed from the immediate jurisdiction of Canterbury all the sees that existed, or might hereafter exist, north of the Humber. This was a

⁴ Dunham, iii. 305.

triumph to the Northumbrian king, who could not have beheld with much complacency the subordination of his bishops to the subjects of the kings of Kent. The same jealousy seized on Offa, king of Mercia, who felt that he was more powerful than either of his brother sovereigns, and who declared that his kingdom was as deserving of a metropolitan as either Northumbria or Kent. His application, too, was successful, and Lichfield was acknowledged as a spiritual metropolis by the bishops of Mercia and East Anglia. We are not told what motives induced Kenulf, the successor of Offa, to restore to the cathedral of Canterbury its jurisdiction over the central provinces of England ; but after a short opposition on the part of Leo, the reigning pontiff, the metropolitan of Lichfield descended to the rank of a suffragan bishop ; and from that period the precedence of the Kentish see has been firmly established. Originally the Saxon dioceses were of enormous extent, nearly commensurate with the kingdoms of the heptarchy :—thus that of Winchester embraced the kingdom of the West Saxons, extending from the confines of Kent to those of British Cornwall. Mercia, extensive and populous as it was, had but one bishop ; but greater than all was the jurisdiction of the Northumbrian prelate, who, from his cathedral of Lindisfarne or York, presided over all the Christian congregations of the Saxons and Picts, from the Humber to the Forth and the Clyde. To suppose that any individual could be equal to the government of districts so vast, is absurd ; yet no serious attempts were made to remedy the evil, until Theodore was invested with the primacy. The first step of that able man was to divide Mercia into five sees,—Lichfield, Leicester, Hereford, Worcester, and Synacester. The deposition of St.

Wilfrid enabled him to divide Northumbria into the dioceses of York, Lindisfarne, Hexham, and Withern. His conduct was imitated by his successor; so that within a few years after his death, seventeen bishops possessed the spiritual jurisdiction of England. Wales had its own prelates: Carlisle had also one of British race, independent of the Saxon metropolitans. Subsequently there were some variations both in the number and the seat of these sees: thus Lindisfarne was transferred to Chester-le-Street; and on the death of Tidferth, the last bishop of Hexham, that see was incorporated with Chester-le-Street, and the metropolis was subsequently transferred to Durham. But Northumbria had never its due number of prelates. This evil was felt by the venerable Bede, who asserts that many districts had never seen their diocesan, and that thousands of Christians had never received the Holy Spirit by the imposition of hands. He earnestly recommended the adoption of pope St. Gregory's plan,—that Northumbria should be divided into twelve dioceses, dependent on the metropolis of York; but no steps were seriously taken to forward the views of pope or monk."

But if St. Theodore urged his favorite scheme with hardly justifiable zeal, is not Wilfrid blameworthy likewise for not at once acceding to the division? It might have been a great humiliation to him as giving a seeming victory to the haughty queen, yet it would have enabled him to maintain a position of usefulness in his native land, and if it was for the good of the Church, should he not have given way? Is not his resistance just like the rebellious arrogance of Dunstan, Anselm, or Becket?—Certainly: such rebellious arrogance as there was about those three wonderful, most honored Saints was there likewise about St. Wilfrid: his character

is in many respects singularly like that of the blessed St. Thomas à Becket. But Wilfrid knew more than Theodore : he knew, what actually took place in the event, that a royal scheme of Church spoliation⁵ was connected with the proposed division of the bishopric. Yet even if it had not been so, we should remember how hardly and by steps St. Wilfrid had won that huge diocese to Christ, and had brought it into happy subjection to catholic traditions and St. Peter's Chair ; and there is a singular faculty given like a new sense to honest and hard-working priests ; it is the love of souls : and perhaps none but a Saint could adequately measure the affliction which a teacher would suffer in having his spiritual children taken from his guidance and paternal care. The convents and their dependent villages all up the valleys of those wooded streams of the romantic north—they were Wilfrid's creation. There he went preaching and confirming, and receiving confessions till he loved his spiritual sons and daughters as not one mother in Bethlehem loved her helpless innocents. The accumulated affections—the thousand peasant biographies half known or wholly, by confession or otherwise,—the local ties,—the remembered difficulties of a new foundation or a recent parish—the miracle vouchsafed through him—the answered prayer—the angel-visited Mass—the guiding dream in one place, the spiritual rapture in another—who shall tell the sum of these things ? Flesh and blood have no such ties as that betwixt priest and people. Yet do we confess our-

⁵ One of the causes of Egfrid's dislike of Wilfrid was the bishop's undaunted opposition to Egfrid's determination forcibly to take away an estate which he had himself formally given to the Church of York. After all, most kings have somewhat of Henry the Eighth's temper in them.

selves unable to appreciate all this and think it an unreal poetry? Shame then on our soft-living priests! Were they by the dying bed, or teaching the shepherd boy, or reclaiming the impure youth, or in patient weariness opening the mind of stupid age, were they happy in the life of self-inflicted poverty so as to be bounteous to the poor, were they lowly in attire, and not absorbed amid the gentle-folk, were they the full seven times a-day in prayer, with constant services and frequent Sacrifices in their old English churches,—were they all these things rather than such things as they often are, we too should be other than we are, and we should be as willing to praise Wilfrid for clinging to his diocese, as we should be unwilling to leave a flock whom we have loved and for whom we have labored, to go to greater wealth and higher dignities. O when will God give us hearts to live such lives that we may come to understand his Saints?

There is some little difficulty in the history which follows. It seems admitted by all that St. Theodore divided Wilfrid's diocese without consulting him either as to the measure itself or as to the persons intruded upon his flock. But some maintain⁶ that the diocese of Lindisfarne, with Hexham severed from it, was left to Wilfrid; and this would make Theodore's conduct somewhat less violent and strange; while others make Hexham and Lindisfarne to have been one diocese conferred on Eata,—and this is more consonant with St. Bede's narrative. But the venerable historian often omits intermediate steps, and it seems more probable that Theodore divided the diocese into four bishoprics, giving York to Bosa, Hexham to Eata, Lindisfarne to Wilfrid, and then

⁶ With Wharton, *Angl. Sac.* i. 693.

Lincolnshire, newly conquered from the Mercians, to Eadhed, whose throne was fixed at Sidnachester, a city passed away, probably from some incommodeity in the site, a thing not frequent in the almost inspired choice which the old founders of cities generally made; for, from certain modern attempts, we might almost suppose, either that men were guided in this matter because of its immense moral as well as physical importance to subsequent ages, or that the choice of sites was a peculiar talent, which has become almost extinct from want of use. The choice of sites in America, for instance, does not seem, by all accounts, to have been made with the mysterious felicity which marked the settlement of the old European cities. However, Sidnachester is gone, and Gainsborough is come into its place, and it is probable the new town is not many miles removed from the site of the old city.

Supposing this to be the true account of the matter, Theodore's conduct was plainly uncanonical, inasmuch as Wilfrid was never consulted, and if the archbishop acted thus on the strength of his legatine jurisdiction, it was unwarrantable, as being uncongenial with the spirit of the court of Rome, and, as the event proved, sure to be discountenanced there. Moreover, there was a peculiar harshness, all things considered, in giving York to Bosa, and sending Wilfrid to the old see of Lindisfarne, the revival of York's episcopal honor being part of Wilfrid's system, of his romanizing movement. We can understand modern writers blaming Wilfrid for having brought the Church of his country more and more into subjection to Rome. Certainly, it is true that he materially aided the blessed work of riveting more tightly the happy chains which held England to St. Peter's chair,—chains never snapped, as sad ex-

perience tells us, without the loss of many precious Christian things. Wilfrid did betray, to use modern language, the liberty of the national Church : that is, translated into catholic phraseology, he rescued England, even in the seventh century, from the wretched and debasing formality of nationalism. Such charges, however ungraceful in themselves, and perhaps downright heretical, are, at least, intelligible in the mouths of Protestant historians ; but it is obvious that Theodore could have no objection to Wilfrid on the score of his romanizing, for the holy archbishop was himself the very presence of great Rome in this island of ours. So that it really was almost a piece of inventive cruelty, of gratuitous harshness, to send Wilfrid to Lindisfarne, and install Bosa in the cathedral of St. Paulinus, with Wilfrid's roof, and Wilfrid's windows, and the beautiful columns which Wilfrid purged of the damp green moss.

Wilfrid's first step, when he was officially informed of this arbitrary act, was to consult the neighbouring bishops, who seem to have advised resistance. Accordingly, he appeared before the king in council,⁷ and complaining of the wrong, he quoted the canons of the Church, which forbade all such changes until the bishop of the diocese should have publicly defended the rights of his see ; and he laid, as he was likely to do, especial stress on the fact, that kings could not, without sin, take ecclesiastical authority upon themselves at all. Further, he desired that any accusations against himself personally might be brought forward, that he might confront his accusers and establish his own in-

⁷ Mr. Smith makes the archbishop present, which is most unlikely from what happened.

nocence. The answer of the king and his council was, that they had nothing to lay to his charge, but that they were determined to carry into effect what had been decreed about his diocese. Nothing was further from St. Theodore's thoughts ; yet, out of excessive love for his own project, he had swerved from the canons, and the consequence had been, not only much individual suffering and injury, but the opening the flood-gates of erastianism upon the Northumbrian Church, and giving a seemingly legal countenance to an extensive sacrilege in the robbery of vestments, plate, and other church property. Where an institution is divine, as is the case with the Holy Church, no one knows how much is tied to little things : in religion, especially, mischief is not to be measured by its beginnings.

It was now plain to Wilfrid, that his cause was to have no fair hearing in England ; and his course was determined upon instantly. The council had openly declared that they had no personal charge to bring against him : from that moment Wilfrid the *man* was put out of sight ; the Church was wronged in him, her ancient canons violated, her majesty insulted, her divine rights usurped by a layman who happened to have a crown upon his head ; it was Wilfrid the *bishop* who had now to act ; and from that moment most wonderful, most refreshing, most worthy of reverential honor and love, is the conduct of the blessed Saint ! All personal feeling, all anger, all vindictiveness, all pusillanimity whatsoever, is absolutely put away. He journeys abroad : is he brooding over his wrongs ? no — his spirit is painfully moved by the idolatry around him : is he impatiently pressing on to Rome ? no — he has forgotten himself, and is loitering among the Frisons, teaching them the Gospel : he stands before

the Roman court ; is he urging the injustice of St. Theodore ? no—quite the contrary ; speaking honorably of him, begging his own personal wishes may not be consulted, desiring St. Peter's successor to legislate for the Church as he thought best, and he, Wilfrid, was ready,—nay, eager to obey. Never did the grace of God so shine forth in the great Wilfrid, as when he was wandering an exile from his own beloved toil-won diocese. Raising the dead was a miracle far short of the wonders of his meek-spirited contentment.

Turning, therefore, to the king, the high-minded prelate, never forgetting due respect, said, “I see that your Majesty has been wrought upon, to my prejudice, by certain factious and malignant persons about you. I appeal, therefore, to the Apostolic See.” O blessed See of Rome ! was never charm spoken over the tossings of a troubled world like that potent name of thine ! What storms has it not allayed ! What gathering evils has it not dissipated, what consummated evils has it not punished and undone, what slaveries has it not ended, what tyrannies, local or world-wide, has it not broken down, what smooth highways has it not made for the poor and the oppressed, even through the thrones of kings, and the rights of nobles, and the treasure-chambers of narrow-hearted commonwealths ! Rome’s name spoken by the widow or the orphan, or the unjustly divorced wife, or the tortured serf, or the persecuted monk, or the weak bishop, or the timid virgin,—have there not been ages when emperors and kings, and knights and peers, trembled to hear it in their far-off strongholds ? All things in the world have promised more than they have done, save only the little, soon-spoken name of Rome, and it has ever gone be-

yond its promise in the mightiness of its deeds ; and is not then that word from God ?

The court of Egfrid scorned the name of Rome : but the scorn was not for long. When Wilfrid mentioned Rome, the courtiers burst into open laughter and loud derision. Wilfrid heard the jeers, and felt them. He was a great man, for he never mentioned them at Rome ; he left his cause to itself, and sought not to excite feeling where fact was enough. He heard the gibes of the boorish peers of that Saxon prince-ling ; and he spoke one sad sentence more, and then left the hall, “Unhappy men ! you laugh now to see the Churches ruined ; but on this very day next year you shall bewail your own ruin.” A mournful prophecy was vengeance enough for him, and for the majesty of Rome.

Beautiful was the sunrise on the autumnal woods in the valley of the Tyne, for the month of August was past or just passing, and the leaden roofs of Hexham Abbey glanced brightly amid the partially discolored boughs ; and bright, too, were the silver breakers on the shallow shore of Lindisfarne : but within were mourning, and dismay, and sinking hearts, and wild projects, and then a silent helpless sitting-still in sorrow, when the news was told that Wilfrid was an exile, that the diocese of York was broken up, that strangers were coming to rule the children of the man of God. Perhaps—alas that it should be so!—there was joy in one holy house, St. Hilda’s home, on the promontory of Whitby, for vehement, indeed, was her dislike of Wilfrid. St. Hilda was a saintly virgin, but she could not understand Wilfrid ; he towered up out of her sight, and she had the strangest possible notions of him. There were misgivings all over England when

the news was heard ; for there were many, even among the bishops, who did not side with Theodore ; indeed, it was by the advice of his brother bishops that Wilfrid had appealed to Rome. Meanwhile, the exile turned his back upon the Ure and the Nid, and sought the frontiers of the Mercian kingdom, and doubtless he passed by his old home at Stamford, that first Benedictine foundation of his, for he found king Ethelred at Peterborough, or Medehampstead, as it was then called. His visit there was brief, and he carried thence a commission from Ethelred to the pope, to request that he would confirm the liberties, privileges, and immunities of the new abbey. From the top of Peterborough minster, looking over Whittlesea Mere, the quick eye may light on the octagonal tower of Ely ; the miserable region of fen which lies between the two cities St. Wilfrid now traversed, and entering the abbey of Ely, which had been his landmark far off, though the octagon was not built till the fourteenth century, he doubtless received a true Christian greeting from the abbess Etheldreda. The examination of the new buildings, begun at his suggestion, would be deeply interesting to Wilfrid ; and he was a man of that elastic temperament, that he could throw off the load of his own griefs almost without an effort.

His stay in England was very brief, and he journeyed onward to the sea. What a hopeless journey it seemed ; surely it needed a high, hopeful heart to bear him through. Alone, or with one or two of his clergy,⁸ he was travelling to Rome, to charge an archbishop and a king, whose messengers would be there with

⁸ It appears that Eddi Stephani and Tatbert at least were with him ; and as he left some monks in Friesland, probably they too accompanied him from the north.

their tale also. It was to be a single-handed fight ; where were his patrons, his proofs, his witnesses ? the primate, too, a chosen man, and sent from Rome ! But Wilfrid knew that Rome was not like other places, so he took heart and went on ; and as to evidence, to Wilfrid a canon of the Church was all in all, and canons were thought scarcely less of at Rome, and Wilfrid knew that likewise ; and let the world do what it would to him, one thing it could not make him—a dejected man ! When Wilfrid approached the shores of England years ago, the elements had seemed to predict his troubles : now he encountered a rough west wind, and that wind had a solemn commission from on High. It saved Wilfrid's life, and carried the Gospel to the Frisons. Ermenburga and his English enemies took for granted that Wilfrid would land at the usual French port, which was Quentavic, now St. Josse-sur-Mer in Ponthieu, and so follow the direct road to Rome. Aware of the badness of their cause, they sent letters and presents to the tyrant Ebroin, begging him to spoil Wilfrid, and, if possible, to slay him. But their request had a different effect from what they anticipated. The west wind saved Wilfrid, but in the ensuing year Winfrid, St. Chad's successor at Lichfield, was driven into exile, some say because he would not fall in with a scheme which St. Theodore had for dividing his diocese, and others because he had taken the side of king Egfrid, with whom Ethelred was at war, and, therefore, when the latter became conqueror, he expelled the bishop. However, Winfrid sounded too like Wilfrid : the unlucky bishop of Lichfield landed at St. Josse-sur-Mer, fell into the hands of Ebroin's agents, and was robbed of all that he possessed ; so that Egfrid's snare caught one of his own friends in-

stead of his enemy. Meanwhile, early in the autumn, Wilfrid landed safely among the Frisons, the beginner, as it were, of those wonderful missions, which rendered the English name so justly dear to the old Germanic Churches.

Thierry III., sometimes called Theodoric, sometimes Theuderic, has suffered the same injustice at the hands of historians as befell St. Bathildis. As that holy queen has been charged with the murder of St. Delphinus of Lyons, so has Thierry borne the character of being Wilfrid's base persecutor.⁹ The inaccuracy has arisen from not distinguishing between the mayors of the palace, the real rulers of the country, and the names of those Merovingian faineants under whom they ruled. In order to clear up St. Wilfrid's journey, it will be necessary to go a little into the French history of those early times. The Merovingians, the house of Clovis, ruled France for about two hundred and fifty years: they were a sterile race, and scarcely gave out one great man, and but a few good men, in the long interval between Clovis and Charles Martel. The characteristic of their rule was this,—perpetual imbecile war; the empire of Clovis was divided into Austrasia and Neustria; the people of the former spoke German, and were Germans in character and way of life; while the inhabitants of Neustria were romanized Gauls, more advanced than

⁹ It is not meant to do more here than common historical justice to Thierry. He was a sluggish, pleasure-loving king, and of course it was a grievous sin in one so exalted to delegate his power to another. Yet one is anxious to say what good one can, or remove evil accusations, when a man has become a penitent at last, as Thierry did. The exile of St. Amè seems to have weighed the most heavy on Thierry's conscience, if we may judge from his donations to the abbey of Breuil. See the lives of St. Amatus.

the Austrasians in the effeminacies of civilization, and therefore behind them in martial intrepidity. The stupidity and sluggishness of the Merovingian sovereigns were such, that in a short time they were but names. The bold, often low-born, adventurers who filled the office of mayors of the palace were the real governors of the country. A little enquiry into the facts of the two cases, an enquiry which need not be made here, will shew that St. Bathildis and Thierry III. have not to answer for the murder of St. Delphinus or the persecution of St. Wilfrid. The really guilty person was the renowned Ebroin, whose course we shall briefly sketch. When Sigebert III., king of Austrasia, died, he left his throne to his son, Dagobert II. Grimoald, the mayor, tired of the somewhat clumsy farce of governing under another name, forced the tonsure upon Dagobert, and sent him to a monastery in Ireland. A counter-revolution followed, in which the Austrasian nobles put Grimoald and his sons to death ; yet Dagobert was not recalled, but the empire parcelled out into three kingdoms, for three infant princes, children of Clovis II. Neustria fell to Clothaire III., Austrasia to Childeric II., and Burgundy to Thierry III. In 670, eight years before Wilfrid's exile, Clothaire died, and Neustria was added to the dominions of Thierry. Ebroin was his mayor, an insolent and ferocious man, whom the nobles feared and hated. A revolution took place. In 659 Clothaire and St. Bathildis had called St. Leger from his abbey in Poitou, and had made him Bishop of Autun, and prime minister ; at the death of Clothaire, St. Leger defended Childeric against Thierry, as the rightful heir ; but, as we have seen, Ebroin carried the day. The revolution which followed appears to have been mainly the work of St. Leger. Childeric was acknowledged

king of Neustria, and Ebroin's life was only saved by St. Leger's intercession. The mayor was tonsured, and put into St. Columban's abbey of Luxeuil, and Thierry into the abbey of St. Denys. So long as Childeric followed St. Leger's advice he reigned happily ; but, falling into a dissolute manner of living, and ill brooking the stern admonitions of the bishop, he confined St. Leger also at Luxeuil with Ebroin, who there reconciled himself with the bishop. In 673 another revolution followed, and Childeric was slain, St. Leger restored to his diocese, and Dagobert II. recalled from his monastery in Ireland. Ebroin likewise escaped from the cloisters of Luxeuil at the same time, and, finding that his post was filled up by Leudesius, he murdered him, and then set up a pretended son of Clovis for king. He invaded Burgundy, and first attacked Autun. The romantic siege, the pious heroism of St. Leger, would lead us from our present purpose. Enough that Ebroin conquered ; that he tore out St. Leger's eyes, though he owed his life to him ; that he ordered him to be left in a thick wood to starve, where he was saved by the pity of Vaimer ; then St. Leger was dragged through a marsh, and over a stony road, till the soles of his feet were cut in pieces. Ebroin then split his tongue, and cut his lips off, and finally had his head cut off in the forest of Iveline, since called St. Leger's wood. Ebroin, making himself master of the person of Thierry, was restored to his post as mayor of the palace, and reigned till he was assassinated by one of his own creatures, a merited end to a life of such manifold atrocities. Thus, at the period of Wilfrid's journey, Thierry III. was nominal king of Neustria and Burgundy, and Ebroin the real governor, who sought the Saint's life ; whereas Austrasia was ruled by Dagobert II., the Irish monk, who had been Wilfrid's guest

in England.¹ Alas ! what awful materials for the Last Judgment does this single page of French history exhibit ! Surely there is something depressing in the study of secular history, which sends us for relief to the lives of the Saints, the marvellous power of grace Divine, the heavenly chapter of the world's chronicle, the one bright aspect of the melancholy past.

Wilfrid, then, by the providence of God, was driven on the Frison shore, and unexpectedly beheld a new field of apostolic labors opened before him. It was yet early in the autumn, and it would have been easy for him to have prosecuted his journey toward Rome ; but his spirit was stirred up by the idolatry around him ; and the hospitable reception he met with from Adgils, the pagan king of the country, would increase his desire to bring him and his people to the knowledge of the Gospel. Labor was almost a luxury to Wilfrid ; he could not sit still for ever so short a while. Some Saints there have been who have served God in hermitages, contemplating the Divine love, and in ascetic silence, or in the desert, not responsive to their vocal praise, have offered such poor homage as they might to the adorable perfections of the Ever-blessed Undivided Trinity ; others there have been, restless men, strong-handed and stout-hearted, who cope with difficulties, war upon the world with a seeming wantonness, and whose energy seems

¹ Alford, and Cressy after him, make Thierry, not Dagobert, to have been Wilfrid's guest, and to have been exiled into Ireland. The only proof they bring is that Thierry was king of the Franks at this time ; they do not seem to know of the partition of the country. Cressy says that Dagobert was dead before this. He is thinking of Dagobert I. who died in 638 ; Dagobert II. was not assassinated till after Wilfrid's journey, about 680, a little before Ebroin, who undertook to revenge his death.

like a habit, not spent by age, but reinforced by use ; and these reform Churches, and exorcise the evil spirits from pagan nations, and strangle high-minded heresies, and break in pieces civil powers when they have become, through vastness or corruption, nuisances to the world. Wilfrid was one of this latter class. He loved the Frisons for their free hospitality ; his spirit rose as he stood in the manifest presence of the Evil One misleading those poor heathen to their ruin ; so he put off his griefs as a pilgrim unbuckles his wallet, and he girded himself up gallantly to the rough work of a missionary. Whoever saw that active Englishman flying, rather than travelling, up and down the Frison tribes, arguing with pagan priests as undauntedly as he would have preached in Hexham Abbey, rebuking the rude nobles for their wassail or their lust with as calm an assumption of power as if he were imposing a penance in chapter at Ripon, preaching in the fields, catechising in the villages, baptizing multitudes in the rivers of the country, eating and sleeping one could scarcely tell when or where,—whoever saw him would have supposed him to be a man who had nothing else to think of but his Frison converts, no cares, no ties, no duties, beyond what were to be seen, and a wonder it might be how he even got through those in the masculine way he did. Yet he was an exiled bishop, he had an intricate cause to plead at Rome, and he was to get thither through the daggers of assassins as best he could. All this was nothing to Wilfrid ; God gave him no rest, the Saint sought it not, loved it not ; rest did not suit him ; peace is out of place here, for if we have too much of it now, we have less of it hereafter. And are we not taught at Nones on a Confessor's feast, Honestavit illum in laboribus, et complevit labores illius ?

If it had pleased God—there is no record that it did so—to give Wilfrid the fore-knowledge so often imparted to the Saints, and indeed imparted to Wilfrid himself when he prophesied prince Elfwin's death, the spirit of the bishop might have been supported by seeing the destined triumph of the Gospel in those parts through the apostolic labors of English missionaries. It is not our place to tell of Willebrord, and Boniface, and Werenfrid, and all the galaxy of Saints who were the companions and coadjutors of Boniface. St. Eligius of Noyon had been in Friesland even before Wilfrid, and the seed that Wilfrid sowed sprang up indeed, and doubtless souls were saved, and the first fruits of the Frisons gathered into heaven. Yet his work seemed to pass away ; the nation was not thoroughly evangelized ; indeed how could it be in his short stay ? But Wilfrid was connected with the future conversion also of the brave and hospitable Frisons. In 665, the year after his consecration at Compiegne, there came to Ripon a Northumbrian, named Wilgis, and his wife was with him. Wilgis was a holy man, and when left a widower, became a monk, and finally a hermit. But now the pious pair had brought to the abbey gate a child seven years old, and committed him to Wilfrid's keeping, and Wilfrid had left him at Ripon a goodly young monk, now twenty years of age. The young monk was Willebrord, the great apostle of Friesland : how far were his labors owing to what he learned of Wilfrid ? It was in the same year of Wilfrid's exile, probably in consequence of his departure, that Willebrord left Ripon, and going over to Ireland, joined St. Egbert, of whom we have already spoken. Thus there is scarcely a page of holy history in those times without Wilfrid's name appearing in it. He had put himself at the head of a daring

movement, and it was likely therefore that his influence would be felt everywhere. Christmas came ; how dreary were the mouths of the Rhine, and the wild flats around in that bleak season ; yet there was less bleakness that winter among the Frisons than there ever had been heretofore, since they came across the Rhine and turned the warlike Catti out of those swampy seats of theirs. There was less bleakness that year, for round many a hearth were Christians keeping Christmas—a new thing in the land, a new word in the Frison tongue.

But the evil spirits which the man of God cast out of the Frisons entered into the heart of Ermenburga, and quickened her envy and her hatred. At her instigation and for her promised bribes Ebroin, who in that very year, perhaps in October, had slain St. Leger, determined to compass Wilfrid's destruction. Probably he knew not how that holy man had once been within his power ; that he, the potent prelate who was even in exile disquieting kings and queens, was the same young Englishman who stood stripped for execution at the martyrdom of St. Delphinus. Things take strange turns : but Wilfrid was preserved a second time. Ebroin sent a letter to king Adgils, promising with an oath to give him a bushelful of gold pieces, if he would send him Wilfrid, alive or dead. When the letter came, it was winter, and Adgils was giving a lordly feast in his palace. Wilfrid was there, and so was Eddi Stephani, the precentor. The king desired the letter to be read in the hearing of all. The contents were startling ; Eddi Stephani might fear, though we know not that he did ; Wilfrid, on whom all eyes were fixed, lifted up his soul to God and was calm, as calm as strenuous men always are when calmness is courage. When the letter was finished, the king desired to have it put into his

hands ; no sooner had he received it than the indignant barbarian tore it in pieces, and threw it on the blazing hearth : "Go," said he to the messenger, "go, and tell your lord that I spoke thus. In such manner may the Creator of all things rend and destroy the power and life of the perjurer and the traitor, and consume him to ashes!" Thus did the Frison king repel the foul temptation to stain his honor and break the covenant of hospitality.

When the spring came, Wilfrid bethought himself once more of Rome, and taking leave of Adgils, pursued his journey ; he had more companions probably than Eddi, unless the precentor's *we* stands only for his bishop and himself. Passing through part of Thierry's dominions and providentially escaping all the snares laid for him, he entered Austrasia, the kingdom of Dagobert II. That prince on his return from Ireland, when recalled to his throne, had crossed England, and had been received and hospitably entertained by Wilfrid at Ripon or elsewhere. A forgetfulness of good turns, though common to kings, does not seem to have formed part of Dagobert's character. Indeed, Wilfrid's hospitality had been, like everything about him, most princely. He had not been contented to lodge and feast his foreign guest, but he had provided him with horses and attendants to accompany him to his own country. Indeed, if Eddi's account be strictly true, so great had Wilfrid's reputation been beyond the seas, that, when Dagobert was recalled, the embassy was sent to Wilfrid desiring him to take the prince out of the Irish monastery where he was, and send him home. Possibly, though only made a monk by compulsion, there might have been some ecclesiastical difficulty in the matter, and the intervention of a powerful and honored bishop might be

useful. Dagobert received his ancient host with royal hospitality, and the see of Strasbourg being then vacant, the most important diocese in his kingdom, he pressed Wilfrid to accept it. But Wilfrid had clearly ascertained to himself his own vocation. In younger days he had almost wonderfully divined the work he was to do, and past experience had satisfied him as to the position which it was his duty to maintain towards the Church of his times. There was another reason, too, which might weigh with him against accepting the bishopric of Strasbourg. He had found the English Church in the most deplorable state of erastian subjection to the civil power. Through his own labors and through the energy of St. Theodore England was beginning to be convalescent, whereas the French Church, under the Merovingian dynasty, was in quite a fearful state of servility. Language can scarcely be found adequate to describe the miserable and apparently hopeless corruption of the French Church in this respect. One is shocked at finding even the blessed Saints carried away by the stream, and addressing incestuous murderers with an adulation absolutely disgraceful. The letter of St. Avitus of Vienne to Gundebald of Burgundy, the conduct of St. Pretextatus of Rouen with regard to the infamous Brunehild, the flattery of St. Fortunatus of Poitiers to the execrable Fredegund, called the female Nero,—these things shew how deeply the spirit of slavish deference to worldly power had eaten into the very heart of the Gallican Church. The spirit of St. Babylas and St. Ambrose had ceased to exist among the French prelates: but it had not died out in the Church. France itself was amazed at the cheering exhibition of it in the truly great St. Columban, the Irishman. The plain-spoken sternness, the vehement denunciation, the

cutting rebuke, the overawing intrepidity of that wonderful man towards Thierry II. and Brunehild stood out in strange contrast with the obsequious humility and abject demeanour of the French bishops. But it was not till the ninth century, or the latter half of the eighth, that the Gallican Church displayed the noble independence, the boldness towards ungodly rulers, which were for so long its honorable distinction. It was not likely then that Wilfrid would leave a work half accomplished, and enter upon it afresh under greater disadvantages in a country not his own. Doubtless he looked forward to the result of his appeal to Rome, as a means of helping on the great work of freeing his native Church from its degrading thraldom. Dagobert does not seem to have taken Wilfrid's refusal amiss. He forwarded him honorably on his journey to Rome, giving him one of his bishops, Deodatus, as a companion.²

Wilfrid now passed on into Italy, and entered the Lombard kingdom. But the emissaries of Ermenburga had been before him : would that virtue were as unsleeping as wickedness always is! Bertari, or Berthaire, was at that time the sovereign of the country,³ and is described as a humble and quiet man, and one who trembled at God's word. Lombardy was no doubt an interesting country to Wilfrid. Its Bavarian rulers, and especially Aripert, were catholics, and had done much towards the conversion of their heretical subjects. Bertari had been expelled from his kingdom by

² Episcopus Tullensis, Mabillon calls him. He subscribed the acts of the Roman Council under Agatho. See Spelman in Conc.

³ He is called by Eddi King of Campania : but see Professor Leo of Halle's Hist. of Italy, i. 90, *et seq.* and Mabillon. Obs. præv. xiv. in Vit. S. Wilf. Cressy turns Campania into Champaigne, which province does not seem to have belonged to the Lombards.

Grimoald, the duke of Benevento ; but the usurpation, though cruel, proved a happy one to the Lombards, as Grimoald completed their conversion, and established close relations between the pope and his people. During his exile, Bertari had been the guest of the great khan of the Avars, in Hungary, who was a pagan. When Wilfrid first arrived, Bertari, it is said, received him with a frowning countenance, being strongly prepossessed against him by the representations of his English enemies : but when Wilfrid had stated his case, Bertari was not contented with mere hospitality, but did all he could to enable him to bring the matter to a favorable issue. As the remembrance of past hospitality had been the cause of Dagobert's great kindness, so hospitality in exile had softened Bertari's heart, and made him merciful to strangers. “Your enemies have sent messengers to me from Britain,” said he to Wilfrid, “saluting me, and promising me great gifts if I would seize a bishop of theirs clandestinely flying to the Apostolic See, and hinder his journey thither. But I refused so wicked a proposal, telling them that I was once, in the days of my youth, an exile from my country, when I passed my time with a certain king of the Huns, who made a covenant with me, in the name of his idol god, that he would never betray me, or give me up to my enemies. After a while ambassadors came from my enemies to the pagan king, promising him a bushel of gold pieces if he would allow them to slay me ; but he consented not, saying, ‘Doubtless, my gods would cut off my life if I did this wickedness, seeing I have made a covenant by my gods.’ How much more then should I,” added Bertari, “who know the true God, refrain from losing my soul for the gain of even the whole world ?” Thus Wilfrid was

dismissed from the Lombard court with great honor and a princely escort.

Did the holy bishop travel on foot like a pilgrim ? He only rode in Yorkshire, when St. Theodore compelled him ; did he return to his mortifying ways, when this was no longer enjoined upon him ? Or, out of consideration for Deodatus, did he travel on horseback, for the affectionate alacrity of Eddi would be overjoyed to suffer any hardship in company with Wilfrid ? On horseback or on foot doubtless they travelled like pilgrims ; the psalter was not forgotten, and Eddi too, the chanter, with them ; it was an itinerant choir in itself, that little band that went on with Wilfrid to the fountain of hope, strength, and justice, St. Peter's chair. In the tenth century, we read of monks singing the office on horseback, and so protecting themselves from that dissipation of mind which the ever-varying show of outward objects would be likely to produce. What a great part of practical religion is an habitual self-recollection, and of all habits none is so difficult to acquire, none requires to be formed with more scientific method ! Meditation itself is a thing to be learned, and learned piece by piece, like a foreign language ; otherwise, it is nothing better than a vague movement of the mind through a shifting series of pious moods, neither bracing the will nor inflaming the affections, but enervating both. The high mountains and the shady woods, the flowery pastures and the bending brooks, the summer scents and the blue dome of sky, the marches of the beautiful clouds and the witchery of light and shade,—we think it something to have our minds filled with these as we travel, and to connect them with the thought of Him from whom all beauty emanates. Nay, it is well

if, by His grace, we do contrive to raise our love of natural objects above the low level of mere unreal poetry ; but the monks, surely, did far better. It does not appear that they were not susceptible of natural beauty, but certainly these men, the most sensitive, tender-hearted of their kind, do not appear to have thought much of such things. They were collected in the thought of God ; the Passion of our Lord, the Dolours of His Blessed Mother, the sobering aspects of the Four Last Things,—these were the objects of their contemplations ; and they sufficed. They had not room for more ; outward shows were distracting, so they sang psalms as they journeyed, that they might not see them. Thus we read of Odo of Clugni crossing the Cottian Alps with Gerald bishop of Riez, and they chanted psalms as they rode, and if the chanting was interrupted, it was, not to praise God for some outward beauty, but to serve Him by some heroic act of lowliness and charity.⁴ Alas !—it must be said—there is but little religion in poetry, because there is so little reality : the truth of poetry is the truth of expression. Poetry does not readily commute itself into action ; how far, then, is it from a wise or holy truthfulness ! Men should beware of loving outward nature overmuch : it is an ensnaring thing, more ensnaring than they think. There is a show of something very devotional about pantheism, a cheap praise of the Most High, which is far indeed from prayer ; men would have it serve, and the world is glad it should pass current for such, as an equivalent for submission to mysterious dogmas and obedience to actual commands. What led to idolatry once, is leading to pantheism now. Job deemed it a

⁴ See Maitland's Dark Ages, p. 301.

thing to repent of, if so be a man had transgressed that way, when his heart was secretly enticed at beholding the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness.⁵ Let this caution be forgiven, though it sound so unpoetical ; it may be needed, where the need is not suspected.

Doubtless, then, Wilfrid and his band chanted as they rode. By the reedy moats of Mantua, and the hazy plain of Bologna, over the fractured sides of the Apennines, by the margin of the blue Bolsena, and over the treeless, misty, discolored pastures of the Campagna, the little band went on. They chronicled not (so we conjecture) sunsets and glorious storms, or the cool liberty of vernal evenings, but they sang the Psalms of David, and the hymns of Western Christendom, and spoke of the science of the Saints, of sin, temptation and austerities, and mourned or rejoiced over the fortunes of the Church, and fortified each other against the then reigning heresy of the Monothelites, and did good in untiring ways as they went along. One obvious subject there was which we think was little heard of, and therefore by the rest the more thought of, and that was Wilfrid's wrongs. And so the bishop of York, beyond his former hopes, entered a second time the ancient gates of Rome.

With what words can we better speed St. Wilfrid into that great and good city than with those which Alcuin, the famous Yorkshireman, addressed to archbishop Ethelhard of Canterbury,—for Wilfrid's life had shewn that he had monished himself in like fashion, and in his human measure had lived up to his own admonition. “ Think,” writes Alcuin to Ethelhard,⁶

⁵ xxxi. 26, 27.

⁶ Alcuin ap. Dunham, ii. 252.

"think of thy renowned predecessors, the teachers and lights of all Britain. While thou worshippest amidst their holy relics, thou canst not fail to be assisted by their intercessions, so long as neither the pleasures of the world allure, nor the fear of kings terrifies thee from the path which they trod. Never forget that thy throat should be the trumpet of God, thy tongue the herald of salvation to all men. Be a faithful shepherd, not a hireling ; a ruler, not a subverter ; a light, not darkness ; a fortress defended by firm trust, not a house built on sand ; a glorious warrior of Christ, not a vile apostate ; a preaching, not a flattering, priest. It is better to fear God than man ; to please Him rather than the other. For what is a flatterer except a smooth-tongued enemy ? he destroys both himself and his hearer. Thou hast received the pastoral rod and the staff of brotherly affection, with that to rule, with this to console, to the end that the sorrowful may be comforted, the obstinate chastised by thee. The power of the judge is to kill, thine to make alive. Why fearest thou the sword of man, seeing that thou hast received from Christ the key of the kingdom ? Remember that He suffered for thee ; fear not to speak for Him. Through love of thee He hung pierced with nails on the Cross ; wilt thou, in thine elevated seat, be silent through fear of man ? Not so, my brother, not so ! In the same manner as He hath loved thee, love thou Him ! He who most labors will receive the greatest reward. If thou suffer persecution through preaching the word, what more desirable ? since God Himself hath said, Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Be a comforter to the wretched, a father to the poor, to all affable. Let thine hand be liberal in

almsgiving ; promptly give, reluctantly receive. Remember that a priest is the messenger of the most High God, and that the holy law must issue from his mouth. Comfort the weak-hearted, invigorate the dejected, bring back the wanderers into the way of truth, instruct the ignorant, monish the knowing, and let your lives be the best teachers."

There sat upon the chair of St. Peter, at this time, a Sicilian monk named Agatho. He had scarcely worn the tiara, when Wilfrid entered Rome. It must now have been, at the earliest, quite the end of July, or, perhaps, and it is more likely, August was some way advanced. We learn this, and it has a peculiar interest in Wilfrid's life, quite incidentally ; for we are told that Agatho had not been long on the throne, when Wilfrid arrived at Rome. Now Pope Donus died on the 11th of April, 679, and we learn by the records of the pontiffs, that the see was vacant two months and a half; so that Agatho could hardly be elected before the 25th of June, and then there were sundry ceremonies of consecration, enthronization, and the like ; so that we may well conclude that it was in reality about the close of August, 679, that Wilfrid came to the threshold of the Apostles. And why is it interesting to know this ?

We remember an August day whose bright dawn stole up the tinted woods of Hexham and glanced among the breakers of Lindisfarne, and that dawn was overclouded by the bad news it brought, that the light of the north was withdrawing into exile. We remember an August day when a bishop of York stood before the king and council of Northumberland, and the bishop spoke of Rome, and the king scoffed, and the witless nobles laughed unmanerly and loud, and the bishop

prophesied evil things of that same August day next year. The twelve moons had waned, and the sun shone on the white walls and the low-browed gates of York, where the bishop was not : he was far away, mayhap entering the gates of Rome. And there was a sad sound of sorrow from gate to gate in York, silence among the rich, lamentations among the poor. A battle had been fought on the Nottinghamshire side of the Trent, and Egfrid and his Northumbrians had been defeated by Ethelred and the Mercians ; and Lincolnshire, whose Church Egfrid had torn from Wilfrid, was now torn from his kingdom by the wrath of God ; and that prince, young Elfwin, beloved beyond all princes, beautiful and gallant, and but eighteen years of age,—he was slain, and his corpse was brought in through the gates of York that day, while the people wailed in the town, and the monks prayed in the cathedral of St. Paulinus ; and here and there a high-hearted Churchman, who saw the greatness of the visitation and its cause, muttered to himself *Laetata est Ægyptus in profectione eorum, quia incubuit timor eorum super eos* ; and all, monks and people, thought of August last and the bishop's prophecy, and there was much talk of Wilfrid in the streets of York that night ; but the good bishop was far away in the crowd and crossing of time-honored Rome.

Agatho, the Sicilian monk, was pope but a short time ; but his diligence carried him through an immense deal of work for the Church ;⁷ and during his pontificate the third Council of Constantinople was held, and the Monothelites condemned ; and he, like Wilfrid, had a taste for adorning churches, and gathered great sums for the two basilicas of St. Peter's and St. Mary Major's.

⁷ Beaufort, Hist. des Papes, ii. 36.

Wilfrid had now a difficult task before him. He found St. Theodore in high repute at Rome, both naturally and deservedly. Whether St. Benedict Biscop had then left Rome or was just on the point of leaving, we cannot decide ; but in that very autumn, Pope Agatho put John, the archchanter of St. Peter's and abbot of St. Martin's, under St. Benedict's escort, and sent him into England to see if the Church there was at all infected with the Monothelite heresy, and to invite St. Theodore to come to the Council his holiness intended to convene at Rome in the ensuing year. In what esteem the Pope held St. Theodore, we may gather from the language of his letter to the emperors Heraclius and Tiberius regarding this very Council. “Our hope was to have joined to this our assembly our fellow-bishop Theodore, a learned philosopher and archbishop of the great island of Britain, together with other bishops abiding in those parts, and for that reason we have hitherto deferred this Council.” Such was the antagonist, indeed enemy, with whom Wilfrid had to cope. His case had excited great interest in Rome, even before his arrival ; for Kenwald, a very holy monk, had been there some time with papers from St. Theodore, containing articles of accusation against Wilfrid, and expressed in language of great bitterness. Wilfrid was behind-hand. Was it a distrust of the justice of his cause which had made him so backward ? No,—the bishop of York had been preaching the Gospel to the poor Frisons. St. Hilda's name, too, was known in Rome, for Rome has an eye and ear far-stretching and spacious as the Universal Church ; and the abbess was not content to say her office on the top of her wave-beaten promontory in peace ; her messengers were at Rome to make Wilfrid's matters worse. Who shall look for peace in a Church that is Militant, whose

very Saints war one with another, not because they are not Saints, but because the battle is in the dark ?

Wilfrid's horizon was indeed clouded. Wronged men while they seek for justice, worship it in their thoughts, and deem it near and easy of access : but when they stand at the judgment seat, that holy power seems veiled ; what was clear grows confused ; a man distrusts himself, and then loses heart, because he sees that right seldom lies wholly on one side. But Wilfrid was in Rome, and to his ardent mind there was all-sufficient consolation in that simple fact. He knew even then what we know still better—what Rome is in the long run, how her spirit runs itself clear of perversions and defilements, and temporary disturbances. In front of the great basilica of the Prince of the Apostles stands a huge obelisk, which typifies the world, and it is surmounted by a cross containing certain relics of the True Cross, and the inscription is the third Antiphon at Lauds and Vespers on Holy Cross Day, Ecce Crucem Domini ! fugite, partes adversæ, vicit leo de tribu Juda, radix David, Alleluja ! *On the whole*, is not this a very truthful allegory of the past history of the Holy See ? If things have gone amiss, and at times looked dark for a while, was there not after all both history and prophecy in the notice Rienzi posted on the door of San Giorgio in Velabro, the Church of England's patron Saint, on Ash Wednesday, 1347, In breve tempo li Romani torneranno al loro antico buono stato ? The Congregation of our Lady of Weeping prays in that Church now.

Which of the seven basilicas or fifty-four parish churches of Rome answers to the description of the church of St. Saviour, of Constantine, we do not know ; perhaps San Clemente on the Esquiline, or San Pietro in Montorio, above the Tiber. However, of such im-

portance did Pope Agatho deem Wilfrid's case, that he convened a special synod of fifty bishops and abbots to decide upon it, and they held their session in the church of St. Saviour. The authentic report of this Council is given by William of Malmesbury and also by Spelman in his *Councils*, and is as follows.⁸

“In the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In the twelfth year of the reign of our most pious and glorious emperor Constantine the Elder,⁹ and his brethren our new-made emperors, Heraclius and Tiberius, in the seventh Indiction, in the month of October, Agatho the most blessed Pope of the Catholic Church presiding : the most holy Gospels being set before in the Church of our Saviour named from Constantine, and together sitting with him these holy and learned bishops as assessors in the present cause, Crescens bishop of Vinon, Phoberius, Andreas of Ostia, Juvenal of Albano.

“Agatho, the most holy and blessed bishop of the Catholic Church and Apostolic City, said thus to the bishops sitting with him : ‘I do not believe that your holy fraternities are ignorant of the cause moving me to call you to this assembly. For my desire is that your reverences would join with me in hearing and treating of a debate lately arisen in the Church of the British Isle, where, through God's grace, the multitude of true believers is increased. A relation of which controversy hath been brought to us, as well by information of persons thence arrived here, as by writings.’

“Then Andrew, the most reverend Bishop of Ostia, and John of Porto, said : ‘The ordering of all Churches dependeth on the authority of your Apostolic Holiness, who sustains the place of the blessed Apostle St. Peter.

⁸ Spelman, i. 158, ap. Cressy, xviii. 4.

⁹ Pogonatus.

But moreover we, by your command, have read unto our fellow-bishops, sitting here with us, the several writings which messengers directed hither from Britain presented to your Holiness : as well those which certain messengers, a good while since, brought from the most reverend archbishop there, together with the informations of others against a certain bishop who (as they say) is privily slipped away, as also those which were presented by the devout bishop Wilfrid, bishop of the Holy Church of York, who, having been cast out of his see by the forenamed holy archbishop, is come hither. In all which writings, though many questions be inserted, yet we do not find that by any ecclesiastical canons he has been convicted of any crimes, and consequently he was not canonically and legally ejected. Neither do his accusers here present charge him with any naughty acts meriting a degradation. On the contrary it appears to us, that, notwithstanding his unjust sufferings, he hath borne himself modestly, abstaining from all seditious contentions. All that he hath done is, that, being driven out of his see, the said venerable bishop Wilfrid made known his cause to his fellow-bishops, and is come for justice to this Apostolic See.'

"Agatho, the most holy and blessed bishop of the Catholic Church and of the Apostolic City of Rome, said to his brethren sitting with him, 'Let Wilfrid, the venerable bishop of the Holy Church of York, who, I am informed, attends at the doors of our cabinet, be here admitted, and bring with him the petition which he is said to have compiled.' The holy bishop Wilfrid being entered into the venerable cabinet, said, 'I beseech your Holiness, be pleased to command that my petition may be openly read.' The most holy bishop Agatho said, 'Let the petition of venerable Wilfrid be received and pub-

licly read.' And John, the notary, received and read it to the holy and apostolic Council in tenor following :

"I Wilfrid, an humble and unworthy bishop, have at last by God's assistance brought my steps to this supreme residence of apostolic dignity, as to a strong tower of safety, whence doth proceed the regulation according to sacred canons to all the Churches of Christ ; and therefore I do assure myself that your venerable fraternities, both by my suggestion in writing, and likewise by the discourse which, at my first coming, I made to your Holiness, have been sufficiently informed that certain persons have violently and unjustly invaded my bishopric, without convicting me of any fault, and in an assembly in which were present Theodore the most holy archbishop of Canterbury and other bishops, they have endeavoured to usurp my see which I had administered for the space of more than ten years ; and in my diocese three bishops have been promoted, though their promotion be contrary to the canons. Now, upon what motive or provocation the most holy archbishop Theodore by his authority without my consent should ordain three bishops in my see, out of reverence to his person, who was sent thither from this Apostolic Chair, I am unwilling to examine. Notwithstanding, if it shall appear that against the rule of ecclesiastical canons, being driven from my ancient see, without any offence committed which is so severely punishable by the said canons, I have for all that been free from all factious tumultuousness, and quietly departed away, after I had protested my innocence, and the illegal proceedings against me, before the bishops of the said province, I do here submit myself to your apostolical judgment. If your sentence shall be that I remain deprived, I do with all willingness and humble devotion embrace it. But if you shall

think fit that I be restored to my bishopric, this one thing I shall only beg of this Apostolic See, that the aforesaid invaders may be expelled from the dioceses which I, though unworthy, have so many years governed. Yet, if you shall judge expedient that more prelates be ordained in the said province of which I have been the sole bishop, I beseech you to take order that such may be promoted there as may be persons with whom I may quietly and peaceably join in the administration of it.'

"After the petition had been read, Agatho, the most holy and blessed bishop of the holy Catholic Church and Apostolic City of Rome, said, 'It is no small satisfaction to this assembly, that in this petition the holy bishop Wilfrid hath manifested to us, that, though he hath been unduly cast out of his see, yet he never made any obstinate resistance by secular power, but with all humility begged the assistance of blessed St. Peter, prince of the Apostles, withal professing his readiness to submit to whatsoever sentence the same blessed Apostle, from whom we receive our authority, shall pronounce by my mouth.'

"The Sacred Synod, there residing, among other decrees, unanimously consented to this, 'We do ordain and decree, that the holy bishop Wilfrid be restored to the bishopric which he lately possessed; and that the archbishop shall ordain for his coadjutors such persons as himself shall, with the consent of a synod to be assembled there, make choice of: and as for those persons, who in his absence have illegally intruded into his bishopric, let them be utterly expelled from thence. And whosoever shall refuse to receive this our decree, let them be interdicted, and let them be anathematized, and stricken by the authority of the

blessed Peter, the prince of the Apostles, whether the offender be bishop, priest, deacon, clerk, monk, or laic.'"

Such was the result of Wilfrid's solemn appeal. The characteristic¹ moderation and discernment of the Roman court are visible throughout. Though its judgment set aside the arbitrary and indefensible use which St. Theodore had made of his legatine jurisdiction, yet no condemnation of the archbishop was recorded, for none was asked ; and while the court annulled the division of Wilfrid's diocese, as now arbitrarily made, yet it discerned the wisdom of St. Theodore's project of reform, and provided for the execution of it in a canonical way, and saving the rights of Wilfrid himself. And as to the bishop, how conspicuous is his saintly moderation in his petition ! Look at his whole conduct. Connected as he was with the northern nobility as the educator of their children, connected with them so closely as to provoke the royal jealousy, supported in his ecclesiastical views, and in his resistance to the legate, by a party among the English bishops, with hosts of ardent monks at his beck, and the Mercian king, his bosom friend, on the frontiers, and his old patron Alfrid, discontented in Ireland, and ready, we may believe, to use any means for gaining the Nor-

¹ It would be edifying to trace the spirit of the Roman court through all ages and in all departments, and see how a most unworldly, dispassionate moderation has distinguished it. It is quite solemn and overawing. The local inquisition was milder at Rome than elsewhere. The hesitation before approving of a reform in a degenerate order is painful to a reader at first, but on consideration it appears admirably wise and providentially ordered. Surely, when evil has most mingled there, there has been something about that court which earthly measures cannot mete. In truth they who do not see God there, may well suspect Antichrist.

thumbrian crown, was ever a turbulent ecclesiastic, "arrogant and seditious," "intolerably proud, artful, and insinuating,"² in a more favorable position for raising a rebellion against an unjust king, or exciting foreign war? What materials for conspiracy were ready at his hands! What a subtle and commanding intellect, what an untiring personal energy, to make use of them! But the canons were enough for Wilfrid. At any time, but in that strong-handed age especially, Wilfrid's prompt retirement and submission afforded a spectacle as edifying as it was unworldly. His delay for Christ's sake among the barbarous Frisons, his refusal of the bishopric of Strasbourg, the gentleness of his demeanour at Rome, all shew a self-restraint and meekness most admirable. There are, indeed, few things in the characters of the Saints more edifying to us of a lawless age, of a nation too much enslaved to its boast of freedom to be really in a high sense free, and of a Church without the show or meagre shadow of a discipline, than the absence of that eagerness of self-justification so painfully exhibited by us in every relation of life, and which men have at last come to defend as a moral principle. In plain words, to be Christlike is to be immoral; to do our duty to God by imitating His blessed Son, is to leave undone our duty to the world. O when will it be understood again, that a churchman's duty to the world is to thwart it, to interfere with it, to retard it, to threaten

² Hutchinson's Hist. of Durham; a work so extremely ignorant on all points at all lying beyond its local subject-matter, as to be of no weight: *e. g.* the author tells us that in those days the names bishop and archbishop were used indifferently; and that St. Theodore, "to conciliate the mind of Oswy," deposed St. Chad, *Oswy's own nominee*, to put in Wilfrid, *whom Oswy had tried to supersede*.

it, to withdraw from it, each as the case may be, and that he only is really a benefactor to the world who so treats it ! When will the glory of God, and not the worship of reputation, be the sole excuse for speaking when the noble privilege of calumny falls to our lot ! If we do not examine our consciences, we cannot meditate ; if we do not meditate, we cannot learn calmness ; if we do not learn calmness, how shall we hold our peace at falsehood and under ill treatment ; yet, if we speak, how shall we be Christlike ?

Very different was Wilfrid's conduct. Could anything be more helpless in appearance than the exiled bishop, with the merriment of Egfrid's vulgar nobles ringing in his ears, traversing hill and dale to get beneath the shadow of the Vatican, king and archbishop against him at home, prejudice and danger abroad ? How defenceless do the Saints ever seem upon the earth, a tribe of errant pilgrims, poor, despised, trodden under foot, yet conquering ! Like Wilfrid, they seem to lack wisdom : they do not make the best of their position ; their own unpractical resignation perpetuates disadvantages, and when the world condescendingly praises their virtues, it sees no grasp, no compass of mind, no largeness of heart, no heavenliness of spirit in what they do. But how dear, not to Saints only, but in a measure to ordinary Christians also, is this defencelessness, this want of visible shelter,—for strength resides in weakness ; since Christ vouchsafed to lie, an infant, in the manger,—to hang, a reputed criminal, on the Cross, and vouchsafes to abide on the altars and in the ciboria of the Church, under the meanness of the sacramental species, awaiting night and day the scanty homage of His cold-hearted people. This new thing upon the earth, this energy of weakness, well-weighed, unriddles

the whole history of the Church's triumph, and reverses the whole series of the world's judgments upon her.

Wilfrid was now free to enjoy the inestimable privileges of a sojourn at Rome. Whatever doubt there might be, and there was not a little, as to the way in which Egfrid would receive the decree of the Synod, Wilfrid's mind was at ease ; and he was able to attain that calm self-recollection needful for visiting the holy places, and reverencing the relics of the countless martyrs which make that city like a vestibule of Heaven. Can we doubt that he revisited the oratory of St. Andrew, where his youthful prayer had been answered ? But, besides these spiritual enjoyments, for such in truth they are, Wilfrid had business still at Rome. He had to fulfil king Ethelred's commission, and obtain the papal confirmation of the privileges of Peterborough Abbey. Among other things, the same indulgences were granted to those who made a pilgrimage to Peterborough, as to those who went to Rome,—of course, we must suppose it was only in case age, infirmity, or some other notable cause disabled penitents from undertaking the salutary austerities of the distant pilgrimage. But there is one clause in the charter which makes us greatly suspect a forgery : the abbots of Peterborough are appointed legates of the Holy See for ever, a privilege quite at variance with the uniform honor paid by the Roman court to the throne of Canterbury. In the year following, (for Wilfrid stayed over the winter,) a council of one hundred and twenty-five bishops was assembled at Rome to condemn the Monothelite heresy, and Wilfrid represented the English Church therein. The Monothelite heresy was at this time ravaging the Church, especially in the East. It had its beginnings

about the year 630, partly in a faulty inference from the canons of the Council of Chalcedon, and partly in the crafty practices of some prelates who were Eutychians in secret. It was taught simultaneously from the patriarchal chairs of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch ; and Pope Honorius,³ if not actually heretical, was misled into favoring the heretics : Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, was the St. Athanasius of his day. It was fostered by the Exposition of Heraclius, and sheltered by the Formula of Constans ; but the pious orthodoxy of Constantine Pogonatus, and the energy of Pope Agatho, obtained its formal condemnation in the sixth General Council in Constantinople, which taught two natural wills in Christ, and two natural operations, undividedly, inconvertibly, inseparably, and unconfusedly, according to the doctrine of the fathers. It was to this doctrine that Wilfrid bore witness in behalf of the English Church. His subscription is inserted in this way.⁴—“Wilfrid, the devout bishop of York, having appealed to the See Apostolic in a particular cause of his own, by whose authority he was absolved of all accusations, both certain and uncertain, and afterwards called and admitted of this Synod of one hundred and twenty-five bishops, where, in the name of all the Churches in the northern parts of England, and in the isles of Ireland, inhabited by English and Bretons, as likewise the nations of the Scots and Picts, he made open profession of the true catholic faith, confirming it, moreover, by his subscription.”

³ Leo II. says Honorius was condemned, not as heretical, but as one “qui flammam hæretici dogmatis, non ut decuit apostolicam auctoritatem, incipientem extinxit, sed negligendo confovit.” Baronius is unfair about this.

⁴ Cressy, xviii. 5.

It is a hard thing for a man of the passing generation to grow a part of the new one : it is a hard thing to fix his affections afresh, to keep his place in the change, to continue the old work with new coadjutors, to change his plan of action without shifting the principle. Yet God's grace is sufficient even for this trial : St. John was kept alive for great ends, when his age had passed away ; and many of the Saints have had to feel themselves each passing year left more and more alone by the departure of those who understood them, and who aided them. The old work is perpetually to be begun afresh ; for the Saints are the schoolmasters of the slow-learning world ; class comes after class, and the holy man dwells among weary beginnings, while he himself is inwardly advancing to perfection. It is a hard lot ; yet what comes of it ? A conviction, which in its depth and strength Saints only know, that God alone is the Supreme Object of our love, and the thought of Him the only helpful stay. “ All things come to an end, but Thy commandment is exceeding broad.” Wilfrid was growing in years ; he was not old, indeed, for he can hardly have been above forty-four, yet he was old enough for the usual changes of the world to begin to tell upon him, old enough for those whom he had brought to Christ to be winning their rest, while his was still delayed. The twenty-third of June, 679, was a mournful day in the abbey of Ely, while Wilfrid was journeying to Rome. It was a day of sorrow, but of triumphant sorrow ; for does not the Church militant gain, rather than lose, when her Saints pass from the comparative impotence of their holy struggle here to the neighbourhood of Christ, and the helpful intercessions made in the presence of the Beatific Vision ? St. Etheldreda died that day, and though her successor was a

Saint as blessed as herself, yet the gentle daughters of Ely mourned, as nuns and monks alone can mourn, for their mother in the Lord. Perhaps in England's breadth, there was not a life so dear to Wilfrid as that of Etheldreda. It was taken from him. The holy bishop's battle was now to grow yearly more and more a single-handed fight ; yet not more single-handed than the prophet's was, with the spiritual chariots round about him.

Supposing the Roman Council against the Monothelites to have been held, or opened, on Tuesday in Easter week, 680, Wilfrid must have been at least eight months in Rome, and the pope now bade him return into England, bearing the written decrees of the Apostolic See with him. Some danger attended even his return ; for when he had crossed the Alps, he found Dagobert had been slain, and Vaimer, one of Ebroin's creatures, waylaid Wilfrid with an armed band, intending either to slay him, or sell him as a slave. It is sad to remember —yet it illustrates the condition of the French Church —that Vaimer was a bishop. Yet he was not bad enough for Ebroin. He excited, as has been already stated, the jealous suspicion of that monster, by shewing common humanity to St. Leger ; and Ebroin compelled him to be ordained bishop of Troyes, as a means of making him less troublesome. However, even as a bishop we now find him at the head of his armed retainers, waylaying a brother bishop. When he met Wilfrid, he broke out into the most violent language, reproaching him for his former hospitality to Dagobert, whom he denounced as a wicked and abominable tyrant. Wilfrid replied to his charge with such an intrepid meekness that Vaimer's heart was touched. He laid aside his evil purpose, confessed himself a sinner, as

many do who yet have not the heart to do penance thoroughly, and finally bade Wilfrid proceed in God's Name and with the help of St. Peter.

Who could doubt but that St. Theodore would receive with reverential submission the judgment of the Holy See? But we learn a lesson here. A power may be great enough to do an evil which it is impotent to undo. The archbishop had lent himself and his high office to do king Egfrid's evil work; the Saint had at the least swerved from the canons he knew so well, and for the most part observed so strictly. Now that he saw his mistake, he was powerless; he could not move one step towards a reparation of the wrong. The spiritual improvement of his people by the multiplication of dioceses had never been anything beyond a pretext on the king's part. When he derided the court of Rome, he had been sincere; and he was consistent now. Wilfrid had some difficulty even in gaining an audience, and when he did obtain admittance, he found Egfrid surrounded by the bishops hostile to himself. He presented the pope's letters sealed, and Egfrid commanded them to be opened and read. But Wilfrid's patience was now to be put to a new trial, even more difficult to bear than any which he had encountered hitherto. If Egfrid had ventured openly to set at nought the authority of Rome, any honest ecclesiastic might joyfully have confronted persecution; for half the pain of persecution is removed when the goodness of the cause is plain. But England in the seventh century had not come to the wicked boldness of setting Rome at nought. The artful king subjected Wilfrid to a more ingenious torture. He charged him with having obtained the decrees by false representations and by bribery; whereupon he committed the bishop to the custody of Offrith, one of his most cruel officers,

took his attendants from him, and ordered him to be imprisoned in a dungeon which the daylight could not enter. But even this cruelty did not move the bishop : his countenance did not change as he listened to the unexpected sentence : his thoughts were for his attendants, not for himself : he compassionately exhorted them to patience, assuring them that the goodness of God could not fail shortly to interfere in his behalf.

When it is the Will of God, His Saints find favor in the most unlikely places. The nature of Offrith seemed to undergo a sudden change. The mere contact with goodness operated as a sort of moral miracle. Still brutal to others, still delighting to superadd torments to the common punishment of a prison, to Wilfrid he was quite another being. He durst not so far disobey the king as not to confine the bishop in utter darkness ; but in all other respects he mitigated, rather than increased, the horrors of his situation. But it was not only from the sight of goodness that Offrith changed his conduct : coarse spirits are more readily acted upon by wonders, and these God now vouchsafed to work by Wilfrid's hands. The keepers who watched the doors of Wilfrid's gloomy cell, heard him continually reciting the Psalter ; and once while he was thus engaged, they beheld a bright light shining through the crevices of the door. They fled in terror from before the presence of the unearthly splendor ; and though Offrith feared greatly at this miraculous illumination of his captive's dungeon, the fear of Egfrid was also strong upon him, and he durst not take Wilfrid from his dismal lodging. The Saint needed not a change ; where Christ's consolations were most likely to find him out, there was it best for him to be, and it is where the help of man least avails that the Arm of God is put forth most readily and most

cheerfully. But this was not all. Offrith's wife was afflicted with a sore disease, which ended in the formation of a large abscess. Her torments were fearful ; nor when it burst was she relieved, for the wound remained open, a painful and gaping sore in the middle of her throat. Soon afterwards she had some kind of fit which rendered her speechless, cold, and stiff, as though she had been a corpse. Her husband, believing her at the point of death, ran for Wilfrid, and throwing himself at his feet, like the jailer at Philippi, besought him to pardon him all his severities, and to come to his wife. Wilfrid, having first prayed earnestly, sprinkled some holy water on the sore,⁵ upon which the woman was immediately restored, and gave thanks to God. Her name was Ebba ; she afterwards became an abbess, and Eddi says she was accustomed with tears to relate this miracle which had been wrought on her behalf.

Offrith now determined to be no longer the king's instrument in the persecution of so manifest a Saint, and having acquainted Egfrid with all that had happened, he desired that Wilfrid might be removed from his keeping. The miserable king seemed given over to a judicial infatuation. The spirit of unbelief hardened his heart, so that he became like Pharaoh, a vessel of reprobation. Calling Offrith a faint-hearted coward, he committed Wilfrid to an officer of the name of Tydlin,⁶ as to a jailer of unquestionable ferocity. Under his care Wilfrid was removed to the town of Dunbar, where Tydlin was governor. But God was still pleased to witness to the sanctity of His servant by many signs and

⁵ A similar miracle was wrought by St. Antoninus, abbot of Sorrento.

⁶ William of Malmesbury confuses the names of the man and the town. See Mabillon's note. Cressy follows Malmesbury in the error.

wonders, the truth of which there does not seem the slightest room for doubting, related as they are by Eddi Stephani, Wilfrid's own companion, and a man of unquestionable piety. Tydlin, casting his victim into a dungeon, ordered his minions to load him with heavy chains. Take the measure as they would, either the fetters were too large and slipped off, or they were too small and would not go on, or if they fitted, rested on the Saint's limbs but for a moment, and then snapped asunder, as if, says Eddi, the feet that went about preaching the Gospel could not be bound, nor the hands that baptized tortured with manacles. Still Wilfrid sang psalms, like Paul of old, for some portion of the apostle's lion heart was his.

To man's eye how miserable was Wilfrid's lot, darkness, cold, hunger, weariness ! How enviable the lot of Egfrid and of Ermenburga ! The royal pair, we are told, made continual progresses about their dominions ; now they abode in gay cities, now in princely castles : wassail and the chase were their chief cares ; they delighted in pomp, and their progresses were attended with almost more than regal splendor. What could there be to envy in a lot like Wilfrid's ? The presence of God's favor, worth more—far more, than sunlight in the darkness of his cell ! When Wilfrid received the pope's order to leave Rome and bear the decrees of the Synod into England, he made a circuit of the holy places, and offered his devotions there ; and for the consolation of the Saxon Churches, he obtained from different persons the relics of various Saints, which were carefully sealed up, with the name of the Saint written outside. These he brought with him into England, to enrich with the benediction of their presence his native land, an importation of more solid value to the country than countless

bales of costly merchandize. He deposited these relics in a chrismary, such as was used for carrying the holy oils ; but when he was pillaged by king Egfrid's orders, the queen obtained the chrismary, and kept it in her chamber, or when she went out hung it round her neck, partly out of superstition and partly as a public trophy over her enemy the bishop. But the Ark of God was a fatal prey to the unholy Philistines, and so were the blessed relics to the ungodly queen, and the Saint himself an afflictive conquest to his conquerors. As Pharaoh had no rest till he let the children of Israel go, so had Egfrid trouble on all sides while he so iniquitously persecuted the man of God. Meanwhile, frequent messengers passed between Wilfrid and the king. Egfrid promised to restore everything which had been taken from him and to give him back part of his bishopric, if only he would acknowledge the invalidity of the Roman decrees, and confess that they had been extorted by bribes and false representations. But Wilfrid's mind was not enfeebled by his dark dungeon at Dunbar, nor his spirit broken by the savage treatment of the ruthless Tydlin. In suffering for the honor of Rome he regarded himself as confessing Christ : in that faith was his hidden strength. He declared resolutely that he would lose his life rather than subscribe to what was false, or say one word in disparagement of the Holy See. For the courtiers of Egfrid had declared that money was all-powerful in the court of Rome, and that any decree whatever might be bought there. This doctrine is not outworn yet : but surely Henry had Church-money enough to buy at any cost a divorce from Catherine, if such articles were ordinarily saleable at Rome. We in England are so accustomed to the buying and selling of benefices, as if they were merchandize, and to the trans-

fer of souls, as if they were flocks of sheep, that we think it must needs be so elsewhere. Simony is indeed a blight which the Church for many centuries has not been wholly free from ; yet perhaps it has never been so legalized at Rome as it has at Westminster.⁷ True, however, it was that Wilfrid had not bought his absolution ; and what was not true, he would rather die than say. Thus, as in all Wilfrid's actions, Rome is uppermost, Rome first in one shape, then in another ; now it comes in the shape of suffering, and Wilfrid acts the confessor manfully. By no torture, not even the appalling one of darkness, can Egfrid drive the Saint to breathe a word in disparagement of Rome : bribes, even the bribe of a bishopric, are equally unavailing ; one little untruth ! a mitre were dearly bought at such a price as that.

Still were Egfrid and Ermenburga doing progress over the beautiful shires of the north : there were music, and arms, and banners, and songs, and dancing, and the wine-cup, and Wilfrid in his darkness at Dunbar, not allowed so much as a grate whence he might look out over the wild waters of the Frith. And the king and queen came to rest at Coldingham, for the king's aunt was abbess there. This must have been between St. Adamnan's vision of the destruction of the monastery, and St. Ebba's death, which was in August 683 or 684. The royal visitors were probably unwelcome guests in that season of compunction and temporary return to greater strictness ; for, though monastic hospitality is unbounded, yet it is their Lord in the person of the

⁷ Paley is not usually given to take the highest possible views : yet a comparison of his interpretation of simony with what we see and hear of daily is very distressing indeed. The modern hatred of St. Gregory VII. has all the wisdom of an instinct.

poor that monks and nuns love chiefly to entertain. They are more at home when washing the soiled feet of the footsore peasant, and teaching an unmannerly churl to cross himself and say grace, than in waiting upon kings or lords. Considering what royal retainers mostly are, it would have been better far if the degenerate Coldingham had never known such guests. We read, to be sure, that the blessed abbot of La Trappe, for all his sternness, received our own James II. once a year, when William of Nassau had driven him from his throne, and once we read that James's queen came with him. Yet that annual visit was for prayer and spiritual retreat, not a temporary halt in the midst of a royal progress. James had done with progresses ; he went to feast his soul at the wonderful fountains of ardent eloquence which flowed at times from that silent man, De Rancé. Yet good was ordained to come out of the royal visit to Coldingham. During the night the queen fell sick ; in a short time she was frantic with delirium, so outrageous as to disturb the whole monastery. How long the seizure lasted appears uncertain ; at any rate, the next day St. Ebba told the king that the cause of the queen's madness, for such it had seemed, and of her present condition (for her limbs were all contracted, and she lay like one at the point of death), was her profane use of Wilfrid's reliquary and his unjust persecution of the holy bishop. Moreover, the abbess undertook to predict that if Wilfrid's property was restored to him, and he was reinstated in his bishopric, in obedience to the pope's mandate, the queen would speedily recover. But, if this was too much to ask, St. Ebba suggested to the king the restoration of Wilfrid's property, his liberation from prison, and a permission to leave the country. To this latter proposal the king assented. He was

wearied out with the wonders of his troublesome captive, and for all his seeming unbelief, the monarch was now beginning to be touched with awe. The result is too gratifying to be left untold : the queen recovered, and though from what occurred it would appear that her repentance was not immediate, yet God did accord that grace to her at last, and after Egfrid's death she retired into a monastery, bewailing her many sins, and especially her persecution of St. Wilfrid, and through the merits of Christ expiating in the works of penance her past iniquities.⁸

We said the repentance of Ermenburga was not immediate ; yet, perhaps, the inhospitality Wilfrid met with among the Mercians and West Saxons was the result of Egfrid's machinations, rather than Ermenburga's persevering hatred. For the Northumbrian king, like Pharaoh, seems to have repented that he had let Wilfrid go, either out of momentary fear, or through a desire to oblige his aunt. During all this time we hear nothing of the intruding bishops, how they resisted the pope's mandate, probably through disbelief of its being lawfully gained, how they governed their dioceses, or what steps St. Theodore took to repair the mischief he had done. One of Wilfrid's enemies had gone to her rest, the sainted abbess of Whitby ; she died in 680, possibly in November,⁹ one year after the decease of St. Etheldreda. However, it is clear that Wilfrid saw no good was to be done by refusing the king's permission to retire, no principle was compromised by submitting to this fresh exile. Gathering, therefore, his companions together,

⁸ Of course the Northumbrian queen must not be confounded with St. Mildred's mother.

⁹ Though of course her feast may have been fixed on the day of some translation of her relics.

and being put in possession of his reliquary and other property, the bishop of York—for such he still was in the eye of the Church of Rome—once more left his diocese and entered the kingdom of Mercia.

The eighth general persecution, in the reign of Valerian, surpassed for cruelty even the fury of the Decian persecution in this notable particular, that the privilege of saying mass in prison was denied to the confessors who were priests ; indeed, it appears from St. Cyprian's epistles, that in the reign of Valerian the holy martyr was unable even to get the eucharist celebrated by other priests in the presence of the lay confessors. This was truly a refinement in cruelty ; yet they who hunger and thirst after righteousness have the promise that they shall be filled. It would appear from the narrative, that Wilfrid, in his darkness, had not the privilege of celebrating mass. This, then, would be one chief delight and privilege of his liberty, of higher value than to look upon the sweet face of day, or breathe the liberal air which God has filled with thrilling health. Yet persecution was not yet over. He entered the kingdom of Mercia, the dominions of his friend Ethelred,¹ for whom he had procured the papal confirmation of the Peterborough charter. It is written that it is better to trust in the Lord than to put any confidence in princes. Wilfrid had been abundantly instructed in this lesson ; yet all

¹ It is stated by some that Ethelred received Wilfrid, that at his command St. Theodore summoned a synod at Bishop's Hatfield to hear the papal bull read, &c. This is said on the authority of the Saxon Chronicle, which was not written before the middle of the eleventh century, and is no authority. Moreover, the Chronicon makes Wilfrid subscribe as *archbishop* of York, which he never was ; whereas the Monasticon makes him subscribe “I, Wilfrid, by apostolic favor regaining the see of York,” &c. In the text, therefore, no notice is taken of this apocryphal relation.

his experience would hardly have prepared him for the base ingratitude of Ethelred. That wisdom is much to be envied which is ever running into error, because the heart is slow to be credulous of evil ; and such was Wilfrid's wisdom. He bent his steps to Mercia first of all, not doubting, surely, of an honorable welcome and a home in exile there ; but he was miserably undeceived. To make up for prince Elfwin's death king Ethelred had married Osdritha,² Egfrid's sister, and so peace had been concluded. When Ethelred, therefore, heard how Egfrid had been reluctantly obliged to let Wilfrid go, and how one of his own nobles, named Beorthwald, had received the exiled bishop with fitting hospitality, he was willing to do Egfrid a pleasure, and, like an unkingly churl as he was (though he changed into a Saint), when Wilfrid trusted he had found a home, and was building for himself and his companions a little Zoar, a humble monastery (*monasteriolum*), he banished the Saint from his dominions.

From Mercia Wilfrid passed into the kingdom of the West Saxons : but neither did he find a resting-place there; for Kentwin's wife was Ermenburga's sister, and, either ignorant of her sister's repentance, or the repentance itself having not yet begun, she used her influence to drive the exile thence also. Weary, yet patient still, unbroken by fatigues, undaunted by persecution, Wilfrid advanced upon his painful pilgrimage, and entered the territory of Ethelwalch, king of the South Saxons. His imprisonment in the north must have been of short duration ; for he returned into Northumberland at Egfrid's death, which took place in 685, and he was five³ years a missionary bishop among the

² William of Malmesbury calls her Ostigild.

³ This is St. Bede's chronology: we suspect five years are too much

South Saxons, so that he must have arrived at the court of Ethelwalch before the expiration of the year 680.

The kingdom of Sussex was founded by Ella in 477, and for some reason or other it took scarcely any part in the perpetual wars and revolutions which were changing the face of the rest of the island, and seems to have been very much behind the other kingdoms of the heptarchy in civilization. Eddi describes the country as so full of woods and cliffs that nature was a kind of rampart to it, which not only warded off invasion, but by almost prohibiting commerce, kept the people in a rude and ignorant seclusion. King Ethelwalch, however, was a Christian, though he had not been so long; Wulfere, the king of Mercia, had persuaded him to embrace the Gospel and to receive the sacrament of Baptism: and Ebba, the queen of Ethelwalch, was Christian also, being the daughter of Eanfrid, a prince probably of the Wicci,⁴ a tribe adjoining the West Saxons, and upon whose border the synod of Augustine's oak had been held. Moreover, among the South Saxons, a Scottish monk named Dicul ruled a little monastery at Bosenham, which contained only five or six monks, eminent for their spirit of humility and love of holy poverty, yet whose preaching was despised by the people. Notwithstanding the presence of all these Christian materials, no effort seems to have been made, or at least with any success, for the conversion of the people till Wilfrid came. St. Theodore was probably busied with the internal government

to assign to St. Wilfrid's sojourn among the South Saxons, for 680 will scarcely hold the quantity of history compressed into it; or else he did not return to his diocese so soon as 685. However, we have not meddled with the usual received dates in the text *so far.*

⁴ The Worcestershire men.

of the existing Churches, in establishing canonical practices, and in pushing forward those extensive plans of improvement to which the Saxon Church was afterwards so deeply indebted. Ethelwalch received Wilfrid and his clerks gladly, and besought them to preach the Gospel. Here, therefore, ended for the present the bishop's weary wanderings. By the mercy of God a fresh and wide field was opened before him for the renewal of his missionary labors. As his first exile had been abundantly blessed to the poor Frisons, his second exile was no less so to the benighted men of Sussex. So that Wilfrid might now make the psalmist's words his own, "Thou hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy, but hast set my feet in a large room."

Something, in all probability, had been silently effected by the Christian profession of their king and queen, and by the winning example of the Scottish monks; for when Wilfrid began to preach, the conversion was almost national at once, and it pleased God to confirm his preaching by a very wonderful miracle. For three whole years a destructive drought had prevailed through all Sussex, and a grievous famine came as its natural consequence. At last the poor sufferers were driven to desperation, and when no longer able to procure food they went down to the cliffs on the abrupt sea-shore by fifties at a time, and joining hand in hand leaped from the top, and were either dashed in pieces on the rocks below or at high tide swallowed by the sea. But on the very day of Wilfrid's preaching there fell a gentle and a copious rain, which gladdened the whole nation, and covered the face of the earth with fresh verdure. It was natural, and of course reasonable, to connect this blessing with the coming of the new faith: most gave up their idol worship; and the king felt himself sufficiently

supported by public opinion to constrain the few who remained obstinate, and so to abolish idolatry throughout his dominions. In return for this great benefit of the Gospel, Ethelwalch conferred on Wilfrid the peninsula of Selsey, or Island of Seals, near Chichester, with land enough to support eighty-seven families.⁵ There Wilfrid built a monastery, of which he took possession with Eddi the precentor, and his four priests, Eappa, Padda, Burghelm and Eadda : it is very questionable whether this did not form the whole retinue of the exiled bishop of York. The episcopal throne was not removed from Selsey to Chichester till the year 1070, when bishop Stigand moved it, yet no successor was appointed to Wilfrid in the see of Selsey till 711. There, for five years, says St. Bede, the bishop of York lived as bishop of Sussex, preaching, baptizing, and confirming ; and doubtless, for all they were Scots, the handful of monks at Bosenham found a kind father in the missionary bishop ; for in spite of his love of the canons, the love of poverty was far more in Wilfrid's eyes ; and, perhaps, when the Easter of 682 came round, Dicul and his monks had been won over to the side of the Roman usages.

When time corrects the mistakes of men and sets their judgments right, it is a gradual work. Time was when the Saints were regarded by so-called philosophic writers as weak, useless people, who retarded improvement rather than accelerated it. Now, both protestant and infidel, by dint of a less partial research, have discovered

⁵ Mr. Peck absurdly argues that from this we may gather the number of Wilfrid's retinue, viz. 870 people, and proceeds in consequence to compare him with Wolsey ! Bede's narrative a little further on would have shewn him that the band of exiles were not the only tenants of Selsey.

that the Saints were the great civilizers of their day, and the laborious lives of many a German and French misbeliever have been, and are being, dedicated to repairing the injustice their forefathers have done to the Church and Saints of the dark ages. Surely God will bless with further truth, and even with conversion, such an honorable and equitable toil as this, if a lowly heart keep down the risings of intellectual pride. To those who deeply reverence the memory of the catholic Saints, who look on them with fear and love as intercessors with Christ on our behalf, and do homage to the wondrous virtue of their sacred relics, it is but a little matter to know that they were instruments in promoting earthly civilization : yet was it a Divine work, and so to be dwelt on with admiring love. To get near to God by an ascetic life is incomparably more than to be the greatest discoverer in science or teacher of humanizing arts ; and this is the first thing a catholic looks at in the examples of the Saints ; yet does he not forget, or even inadequately estimate, the lower task which they have been commissioned to fulfil.

Wilfrid's heart was moved with pity for the famishing men of Sussex. True the rain was come, and the dismal withered downs had clothed themselves with bright sward, cheering both heart and eye. Yet the seasons must go round, and the fruitful year fulfil its complement of moons, before seed-time and harvest, and the teeming garner, and the busy threshing-floor would quite end the famine. The bishop saw that the sea and inland brooks were full of fish, and that the ignorant peasants for want of skill could make no use of this Divine bounty. The art of fishing went no further than the capture of a few eels. The bishop, therefore, borrowed all the eel-nets he could, and seems to have made a kind of drag-net of

them. He then went down to the sea with his men, cast in his net, and brought to land three hundred fishes, to the joyous surprise of the poor natives, who perhaps thought the draught had somewhat of a miraculous character about it. But, if they admired the bishop's skill, they loved his kind heart more. Those three hundred fish, thought the men of Sussex, will go to the bishop's monastery ; but no, St. Wilfrid's distribution of them was as eloquent as a sermon to the Sussex converts. He divided the fish into three heaps of one hundred each ; the first he gave to the poor, the second to the owners of the borrowed nets, the third he reserved for the monastery. Wilfrid had many ways of preaching the Gospel. Was not this a beautiful preaching on that Sussex shore where so lately the famished poor had dashed themselves from the cliffs in the intolerable pangs of hunger ? But there was a preaching yet more beautiful upon the low-lying peninsula of Selsey. Not content with instructing and baptizing the free-born tenants on the monastery lands, he counted up the poor slaves who were now his absolute property. There were two hundred and fifty men and women, and these he immediately gifted with their liberty, as if it were a monstrous thing for him to hold a slave who came to enfranchise souls from the servitude of Satan. When the news spread over Sussex that the bishop's slaves in Selsey were set free, was it a wonder that the people flocked to enter through the waters of Baptism into the glorious liberty of the catholic Church ? Such was Wilfrid's life in the diocese of Chichester : no doubt there was the holy-water by night, and all the austerities by day which we read of when he was at Ripon ; and then there were all the cares from without, the cares of a bishop's office, and that bishop a missionary. He knew not that in the

thirteenth century there would be a poor persecuted bishop going up and down among the villages of Sussex, persecuted by Henry III. as he was by Egfrid, appealing to Rome, yet for two years ineffectually; Rome, in the thirteenth century, as well as in the seventh, still at her blessed work of rebuking rude, strong-handed kings; a Saint, too, in the see of Canterbury; but St. Edmund was the friend of St. Richard de Wyche, whereas St. Theodore was not yet reconciled to Wilfrid. St. Richard entered into Wilfrid's labors; but he, too, had a struggle to hold them fast. His help came from the same quarter as Wilfrid's, the holy hills of Rome.

Wilfrid's name is also connected with the first public observation of St. Oswald's day; for it was in 681, according to the usual dates, that the pestilence was stayed in the monastery of Selsey, at the intercession of St. Oswald.⁶ The Yorkshire monks had brought their northern traditions and devotions with them. This pestilence must have greatly tried the faith and afflicted the heart of Wilfrid; for we read that it carried off some of his original companions as well as many brethren who had been converts from the South Saxons. But here, again, the common chronology seems very dubious. A monastery could hardly have been built and furnished with new brethren to the extent which St. Bede's language implies, within the year after Wilfrid's arrival in the kingdom. Perhaps the best plan for making the narrative straightforward is to assume Bede's five years to be the real duration of St. Wilfrid's sojourn among the South Saxons, and, in opposition to Mabillon, to fix his arrival in Sussex in the year 682, and his return to his diocese in the year 687, the second of Alfrid's reign. St.

⁶ See his Life in this Series, No. VI. 74, *et seqq.*

Bede (*Hist.* iv. 13,) makes him return on Egfrid's death, whereas (v. 19,) he distinctly states that he did not return till the second year of Alfrid's reign, and from this point we shall fix the dates according to this assumption. The year 686 we conjecture to have been spent partly in Sussex and partly in the north.

Meanwhile St. Ebba died, and sundry changes of an ecclesiastical nature took place in Wilfrid's diocese. Indeed, it would seem altogether that it had not been wisely partitioned, or that the king would not let the Church alone. In 681 St. Theodore sent Trumwin into Scotland as bishop of the Picts, but after four years he was compelled to return, and retired into the monastery of Whitby. In 684⁷ St. Theodore, at the request of king Egfrid, held a synod in Northumberland, at Twyford-on-the-Alne, in which the archbishop deposed Tumbert, the bishop of Hexham. Eata, who had left the see of Hexham for that of Lindisfarne, was now moved back to Hexham, and St. Cuthbert was compelled to receive consecration, as bishop of Lindisfarne. How St. Theodore held this synod at Twyford in the face of the pope's decrees, the truth of which he had now had abundant time to ascertain, is perfectly inexplicable. Eata was succeeded in the see of Hexham by St. John of Beverley. But, quitting this scene of confusing change, and leaving Wilfrid in his active peace at Selsey, master of all the hearts of all the Sussex men, let us turn to his persecutors Egfrid and Ermenburga.

How provoking is the scantiness of the old chronicles when one would fain set in a clear light the doings of the Saints, the actions of blessed spirits who now live and reign with Christ in Heaven ! Why should we be ashamed to confess that we write this life of Wilfrid under con-

⁷ Cressy says 685.

tinual constraint, and harassed by a suspended judgment; for ever and anon the story touches on the life of Theodore, and his conduct looks ill-favored, yet perhaps had some good interpretation if we knew enough to find it out? For this we do know, that he was one of the greatest men and holiest Saints which Christendom possessed in its whole width in the seventh age. Why then should we be ashamed of confessing that we dare not write freely about him, for fear of offending God? One may even feel a legitimate distress in reading dramas and imaginary histories, wherein parts are boldly assigned to men, who, though unseen, are yet alive and nigh to God and so calling for our reverence, or reprobate and so laying on us the duty of a solemn silence, or we know not what they are, and so our office is to pray, and to make mention of them at the blessed Sacrifice of the Altar. But at this rate a man may say it is impossible to write the lives of the Saints; we can only compose their panegyrics, and so the force of their example will be lost. No; it is not quite thus: we do not say, the very thought is shocking, that the Saints were sinless; but that in cases where from antiquity or imperfect records, or any other cause, their actions are doubtful, that which in the case of the living we call the judgment of charity becomes in the case of the Saints, whom the Church bids us reverence by name, something incomparably more solemn. Sure we are—the Church has ruled it—that Wilfrid was unjustly used; and if ever he grew irritable, if ever out of a human self-love or a mere jealousy for his rights he unnecessarily thwarted St. Theodore's reforms, we doubt not he repented of it humbly. We have the archbishop's own confession that on *his* side there was temper, and angry zeal, and a respect of persons; and the holy primate humbled himself to his adversary and

made reparation for the wrong, so far as lay in his power. How then shall we, even in writing, set them one against the other, when they reign together now? May they intercede for us their fallen children in the faith !

But let us follow the fortunes of Egfrid and Ermenburga. It was in no spirit of unmanly exultation that the ancients dwelt on the disastrous lives or untimely ends of the powerful men of this world, who in their wantonness persecuted the catholic Church. They amassed such melancholy judgments and condensed them into one dark chronicle, by way of solemn consolation to themselves and awe-inspiring admonition to the world. They regarded such fearful interventions of Providence as forming a perpetual comment on our blessed Lord's promise to be with His Church : it was a pious act to collect them together ; they formed a kind of theology in themselves. But while we proceed to tell how like a judgment was Egfrid's doom, shall we number him among the persecutors ? It is hard to do so. William of Malmesbury knew not whether to say good or evil of king Egfrid ; how much more then should we suspend our judgment ! What could be more atrocious than his persecution of St. Wilfrid, or more barbarous than the sufferings which he inflicted on him ? And of a piece with this barbarity were his inhuman ravages in Ireland and among the Picts. Yet, on the other hand, he was the munificent patron of St. Benedict Biscop ; he it was who endowed the noble monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and whó, out of reverence for St. Peter's chair, asked a confirmation of their charters from the Holy See : and further, he was the friend of St. Cuthbert, and in many things followed his counsels. It would have been well for him had he followed the last counsel the

bishop of Lindisfarne ever gave him, when he besought him not to invade the Picts. In the year 684 Egfrid, provoked by some hostilities, the nature of which is not recorded, sent an army under Bertus to chastise the Irish : by the king's orders the commission was fulfilled with circumstances of appalling ferocity: neither age nor sex, neither churches nor monasteries were spared by the Northumbrian army: that miserable island, which still pleads against England with an indictment of almost numberless counts, was laid waste with fire and sword, until there rose up to Heaven from the whole land one general curse against the brutal king of Northumberland. The English themselves regarded that curse as answered and fulfilled in Egfrid's fate; neither were his own subjects slow to connect his persecution of Wilfrid with his subsequent misfortunes. The noise of that awful curse was borne across the breadth of England, and broke the conventional peace of Whitby. The blessed Elfleda had succeeded St. Hilda in the government of the monastery, and she was Egfrid's sister. Grievous it was to her gentle spirit that her brother should perpetrate such shocking cruelties and such daring sacrilege, and a cloud came over her, and she felt inwardly that there was too much cause to fear that that Irish curse would be an answered prayer. On Coquet Island she met St. Cuthbert, and asked him of the future, for she knew how abundantly God had given that holy man the gift of prophecy. From what the bishop said, Elfleda augured the worst, and so it proved. In 685 Egfrid determined to take vengeance on the Picts: with more than a wise foreboding St. Cuthbert warned him to abstain. But anger is always infatuated: besides, the Irish curse was at his doors, so Egfrid marched across the border to his doom.

When Egfrid gave, he gave truly with the bounty of a king. One of his gifts to St. Cuthbert was the ‘merry’ city of Carlisle, with the region fifteen miles around it. But Carlisle was not merry then. For thither Ermensburga had retired to wait for news of Egfrid from beyond the Solway. That Irish curse—it haunted Ermensburga too : a melancholy presentiment took possession of her, and her spirit was overwhelmed with heaviness. St. Cuthbert went to Carlisle out of charity to comfort the queen ; yet what could he say to her when he half knew what was to be the end of all ? The day after his arrival, the citizens were fain he should go out to see the city, for it was his own, how goodly it was and how marvellous its walls. The bishop followed where they led him, and by the brink of the Roman fountain it was revealed to him that at that moment Egfrid was defeated and slain. Carlisle might not be safe, if the Picts, flushed with their success, should retaliate, and invade Northumberland. It was Saturday; he bade the queen stay Sunday over and then withdraw. So Egfrid perished ; but Ermensburga came to a better end ; for when next we read of Cuthbert coming to his city of Carlisle, it was to give the veil to the penitent and widowed queen.

In 685, the year of Egfrid’s death, Cedwalla of the West Saxon blood royal, slew Wilfrid’s patron, Ethelwalch, and took possession of the kingdom of Sussex. It would appear that he was at this time a pagan, but soon after became a convert to the faith ; and was as staunch a friend to Wilfrid as ever Ethelwalch had been. In the year following Cedwalla invaded the Isle of Wight ; he was then a catechumen, and he made a vow that if he was successful, he would consecrate a fourth part both of the land and booty to the service

of God. In performance of this vow, he made over the fourth to Wilfrid, as the minister of God. But Egfrid's death was likely to open Wilfrid a return to his own diocese ; he therefore resigned his portion of the island to his nephew Bernwine, joining with him a priest named Hiddila to preach and to baptize. The Isle of Wight was the last outpost of paganism, the last to be won to Christ. St. Cedwalla stormed it with his secular power, and under Wilfrid's auspices it was soon brought to capitulate to the mild terms of the Gospel, and to bear the gentle yoke of Christ. It was fitting the great Yorkshire missionary should be chosen to end the conversion of England, by evangelizing that beautiful island. To give the Gospel to the islanders was his last act in those parts. No bishop, for the present, succeeded him at Selsey ; the Church of Sussex became, for a few years, part of the diocese of Winchester.

If it lift the spirits and cheer the heart to have wrought some mighty change in Church or State, a change not mighty only but ennobling, there is something which softens the heart more and soothes it better, and bears to be dwelt on longer, in the joy of having been a fountain of happiness springing up in secret places, and running over upon the endearing ties of private life. The Church has changed the surface of the world, but how much holier and more heavenly is its work when it has come whole and entire to each cottage of the poor man, as entire as though its rights and liberties were wholly his and only his ! Cedwalla gave to Wilfrid the town of Paganham in Sussex, and Wilfrid had some touching freedoms granted to the people of his town, that no castle should be built there, no tax laid upon the people for the mending of the bridges, and no conscription for the army : "and I Cedwalla," so runs the

charter, “for a further confirmation hereof, have put a turf of the said ground upon the holy Altar of our Saviour, and by reason of my ignorance in writing my name, I have expressed and subscribed the sign of the Holy Cross.” For many a year how many a mouth blessed Wilfrid in the little town of Paganham ! When the lights twinkled in the windows on a winter’s night, to a passing traveller those straggling streets of Paganham might look like any other town ; but it was not so : the Church had touched the town, and a very chrism of pure and simple-mannered happiness was out-poured upon it. No stern castle frowned with its deep machicolations from the summit of the hill, but the sheep browsed there, and the children played there, and there were the blue sky above, and the sweet unhindered breezes. No rude retainers, no debauched soldiers spread dismay and sin among the peaceable inhabitants ; no unmannerly officers of the king raised cruel levies for the bridges which the swollen brooks had forced away in the last rains ; and the young men followed the plough and washed the sheep, and married early, and so had married sons to give a home to their grey hairs, and all because youths were not pressed for the royal army. What deep, yet hardly conscious happiness—for happiness is not deep when it is conscious—was there by the fire-sides of Paganham ; and had you seen the children playing on the hill, where the castle *would* have been and was not, and had asked their Christian names, how many, think you, would have answered—Wilfrid ? Not a few.

The life of the great archbishop of Canterbury was now drawing to a close. He had been primate for nineteen years ; eighteen had been spent in holy strenuousness, in unwearied care of the Churches, in the pain-

ful and difficult restoration of all good things decayed. Fourscore and four years pressed upon him, and it was time he should set his house in order. Blessed Saint ! a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, no mean city, he had been a Paul to us, and did great things for our nation, the love of Christ making even sweet to him the rough ways and indocile tempers of us distant islanders. But now he bethought him of the past ; and what had happened between Wilfrid and himself did not seem to be all that it should have been ; the approach of death threw a different light upon things. Most of all was he struck with that untiring, self-forgetting energy which, when Wilfrid might no more edify the Church as a ruler, constrained him to found new Churches as a missionary : such an outpouring of strong love to God and His Christ surely betokened God's Spirit in His servant. Perhaps to an Oriental—yet Orientals can be untiring too—such a display of Saxon earnestness was something astonishing. Theodore might have seen, or deemed he saw, asperity in Wilfrid, a temper apt to take fire at slights, a mind obstinate and unable to forego its own resolutions ; yet nowhere had he seen dejection, ease, languor, sullenness. Stay it where you would, stop this vent or that, still Wilfrid's zeal burst forth, and flowed where it could, as readily, generously, and purely as though all vents were equally natural to it, and there had been none to meddle with its first chosen course. And the more the archbishop thought, the more he wondered ; and the more he wondered, the more he loved. It was the year St. Cuthbert died, 687, in every way a memorable year ; Wilfrid was in Sussex when he was surprised by a summons from the archbishop, desiring him to meet him with bishop Erconwald in London. To these two prelates St. Theodore made a general confes-

sion,⁸ “acknowledging withal that the thing which caused in his mind the sharpest remorse, was his injustice against the holy bishop Wilfrid, in that he had partly by open endeavours procured, or by secret connivance permitted him to be despoiled of his bishopric against the ecclesiastical canons. ‘And because,’ said he, ‘I am by a warning from Heaven, and my frequent infirmities, admonished that my death will not be delayed beyond next year,⁹ I beseech you, O holy bishop Wilfrid, mildly to forgive me my fault, and moreover to take upon you the charge of my archbishopric : for I do not know any one of the English nation so capable of it, considering the eminence of your learning, and skill in the ecclesiastical laws of Rome. As for myself, I will, by God’s grace, for the future be very diligent to wipe out all old offences by my care to perform all good offices ; and among the rest, I will endeavour by my intercession, and all the authority I have, to reconcile to you all the princes who have hitherto been your persecutors.’ St. Wilfrid answered the archbishop with all meekness, as became so holy a person ; but to accept of the archbishopric without the order and decree of a national council he would by no means consent. St. Theodore, notwithstanding, used his utmost endeavours to obtain his compliance in this point, but in vain. Wilfrid’s reply was, ‘May God and St. Peter pardon you all our differences : I will always pray for you as your friend. Send letters to your friends, that they may restore to me part of my possessions, according to the decree of the Holy See. The choice of a successor in your see will be afterwards considered in a proper assembly.’”

⁸ Such seems to be the import of William of Malmesbury’s language, iii. de Pont. Cressy’s Tr.

⁹ He did not die till September 19, 690.

Surely never was there a man less ambitious than Wilfrid. With what honorable triumph might he now have mounted the throne of Canterbury, as coadjutor to an old man of fourscore and four years ! What a prospect of usefulness, what a magnificent field for carrying out the great work he had begun, of thoroughly romanizing the Saxon Church ! Was it then the expectation of fresh fatigues that daunted him ? Wilfrid was not a man to be scared by peril or by toil. Besides, he would have but to carry out and fulfil what Theodore had already in great measure executed. No ! it was simply this ; Wilfrid was a Saint, and, as such, he wanted the appetite for dignities. The thirst for usefulness never takes that shape among the Saints : it is the mark of an ordinary Christian ; for to do good in high places is indeed to do good, but it is the lowest way, for it is not where Christ did it ; the highest way of usefulness is in holy poverty and Christlike abasement, and is only spiritually discernible. It is good for a heart to desire high place that it may serve the Lord, but thereof in the end cometh not seldom a burdened conscience and a lukewarm spirit. To pray against having dignities is a sure way to have room given to be useful, room for such secret operation as resembles the hidden strength of daily Providence, room for such a life as shall through grace in its poor measure be a copy of the Three and Thirty Years.

Besides which, Wilfrid loved his Yorkshiremen ; he loved his monks of Ripon and of Hexham. There God had called him ; thence the iniquity of men had driven him away. The Church suffered in him ; in his eclipse Rome's honor was overshadowed too ; it was better for the Church, it was a more notable victory of principle, that he should be reinstated in the north, than that he

should sit in St. Augustine's chair. But even here how edifying is his humility! He only requests to be restored to part of his possessions; yet the Roman decree went beyond this; it authorized the expulsion of the intruding bishops: Wilfrid's suffragans were to have his approval first: but charity seeketh not her own. Again, St. Gregory had given metropolitan honors to York; they had been lost in the Scotch succession at Lindisfarne. Wilfrid knew of this,—nay more, the power of Canterbury unjustly used had galled him fearfully: yet even at Rome he never sought a fresh grant of this useful dignity. York had no archbishop for forty-six years more yet, when Egbert, Alcuin's master, retrieved the ancient honors of the see. Surely all this abstinence from dignities, this withholding of just claims, is a token of an unworldly spirit. Historians have expressed surprise at the personal abasement of the Saints, and their *arrogance* where the rights of the Church are concerned: craft and hypocrisy, every evil quality has been tortured to give up the meaning of the riddle, yet has it remained a riddle still. O the stupidity of earthly wisdom, how is she a poor blindfold thing walking the courts of the sanctuary and the alleys of the cloister in an ill-mannered and ungainly way, like a misbehaving intruder in a sphere above his vulgar birth!

St. Theodore, according to his promise, wrote letters to king Alfrid, and also the abbess Elfleda, who had unhappily inherited St. Hilda's dislike of Wilfrid. His letter to Ethelred, the Mercian king, who had treated our Saint with such royal ingratitude, has been preserved both by Eddi and William of Malmesbury, and runs thus:¹ “Your admirable sanctity, my beloved son,

¹ Cressy, xix. 10.

may hereby take notice that a perfect reconciliation is made between myself and the venerable bishop Wilfrid. Therefore I do admonish you, and in the love of Christ require, that you would still continue, as you have hitherto done,² your protection of him, who these many years has been despoiled of his revenues, and forced to live among pagans, in the conversion of whom he has served our Lord with great effect. Therefore, I, Theodore, humble bishop, do now in my decrepit age, make this request unto you, desiring the same which the apostle's authority recommends, touching a holy bishop who has so long a time possessed his soul in patience, and in imitation of Christ our head with all humility and meekness expects an end of so many injuries done him. Moreover, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me enjoy the comfort of seeing your face most desirable to me, and let not a journey for that purpose seem burdensome to you, that my soul may bless you before I die. Beloved son, perform the request I have made you in behalf of the said holy bishop, and be assured that if you obey your father who is shortly to depart out of this world, you will reap great profit to your soul by it. Farewell.” St. Ethelred,—for he, too, was a Saint, great as king of Mercia, but greater far as monk of Bardney, in that a cowl is a holier thing than a crown,—St. Ethelred received Wilfrid with honor and hospitality, nor can we doubt that the blessed king followed St. Theodore's example, and humbled himself to confess his former fault. He restored to Wilfrid all those Benedictine houses which he had founded in Mercia, with their lands and privileges intact, and then

² St. Theodore was probably ignorant of Ethelred's ingratitude, for Wilfrid was not a man to publish his wrongs.

bid him God speed as the bishop of York went to his ancient diocese, now doubly dear to the returning exile.

On the throne of Northumberland sat his old friend and first patron Alfrid. But Alfrid was a changed man. It was not so much that exile and adversity had altered him, though they are bad nurseries for a king, unless they make him into a Saint. Alfrid was now called the Wise : he had taken to book-learning during his exile, and his heart was none the better for the improvement of his head. It seldom is. Doubtless, too, in the famous schools of Ireland, the head-quarters of Celtic literature, he had lost some of his former reverence for Rome ; and that is always a moral loss, as well as an error in opinion. There is a kind and degree of knowledge not uncommon among the great ones of the earth, which, when carried to the utmost, has no tendency to enlarge the heart or elevate the temper of a man ; it is what is usually called statesmanship : at best a far-seeing, discreet craft, but essentially heartless and illiberal, and, as being heartless, continually deluding and over-reaching itself. So far as the Church is concerned, this poor statesmanship operates in checking great reforms, and quenching ardent outbreaks of zeal, and in filling prelatures with barely respectable mediocrity, lest high principle and a keen intellect should be troublesome and interfering. It has a mortal dread of Dunstans, and of Anselms, and of Becketts ; and well it may, for they are ever too much for it. This same prudent state-craft has been some centuries hard at work to strangle the spirit St. Ignatius Loyola left on earth ; but it only grows more vital every day, because truth is on its side, and noble-mindedness, and heavenly principle, and marvellous

sanctity. . Probably, therefore, Alfrid, in the shallow depths of his Celtic state-craft, saw that Wilfrid was not the kind of prelate that would suit his new views, nor the kind of man to let a crowned intellectualist experimentalize upon the Church. However, from whatever cause, Alfrid was an altered man, and from the first the alteration might have been detected even under the surface of a kindly welcome : for he did not give Wilfrid his see back at once ; there was a hesitation for which no cause is assigned. He put him in immediate possession of his abbey at Hexham ; and then, after an interval, restored the monastery of Ripon and the see of York. St. Bosa and St. John of Beverley retired in peacefulness, and out of obedience to St. Theodore's letter and the Roman decree. St. Cuthbert's secession and speedy death left the see of Lindisfarne also to Wilfrid's administration, until Eadbert was consecrated to it; Wilfrid voluntarily relinquishing it in order to carry out, in a canonical way, the project of St. Theodore to multiply bishoprics.

Once more, then, is Wilfrid on the throne of York, once more in the valley of the Tyne, and by the dark silent waters of the Nid, once more visiting, preaching, confirming. There was many a monk both at Hexham and at Ripon who had prayed for the return of their father in the Lord. Wilfrid had trained them ; they had been brought up in his system ; they had come to think,—and not altogether wrongly,—that the welfare of the Northumbrian Church was bound up with the welfare of the holy bishop ; not altogether wrongly—for, though it be true that in Wilfrid's absence there was all the outward, active show of a Church ; though Saints, canonized Saints, filled the sees ; though the archbishop of Canterbury actually

held synods north of the Tyne ; though there was constant doing and undoing, partitioning and repartitioning, change upon change ; yet, for all that, we cannot find that the Church in the north was making way. St. Cuthbert's prayers were rising up from that wave-beaten spot of green, treeless turf, which hung on the coast of Northumberland ; doubtless his merits were amassing treasures for the northern Church in years to come. Blessed ascetic that he was ! who shall count the debt the men of Durham owe to him ? Forgotten, as many catholic things are, the poor of that seven-hilled city in the north have yet an affectionate remembrance of the wonder-working Cuthbert, and his strange wandering relics. Still the Church does not seem just then to have made any real advances ; the monastic system does not seem to have spread or gained strength or fresh spirituality ; and, after all, the flourishing state of monastery is the safest test of real church reform. Was it that the blessing was suspended, and that even the saintly intruders into St. Wilfrid's see worked at a disadvantage, as working against Rome, and without the Apostolic benediction ? The later history of this insular Church would seem to shew that the absence of that benediction is almost a blight : it stunts all growths, though it may not cause absolute sterility ; it is thus that catholic churches decay and are transformed into pusillanimous communities. If it were that the loss of Rome's blessing was really keeping back the northern Church, then we may understand how it was that the Church *did* make way in one place, and in one place only,—at the abbeys of Wearmouth and of Jarrow : for there was the presence of St. Benedict Biscop, who so honored Rome, and with such tender devotion loved that sacred place, that, in spite of

all the perils both by land and sea, five weary pilgrimages hardly satisfied his ardent feelings towards the Holy City. Where he was, therefore, the Church might well flourish ; and he died while Wilfrid still ruled the Church of York. Strange to say, there is no record that these two Saints, doing the very same work, and filled with the very same spirit, ever met again after their cold parting in the streets of Lyons years ago, when Eddi, who could find nothing to blame about either, alluded, in his simple way, to Paul and Barnabas. The history of the five years of Wilfrid's peaceful rule are known in Heaven, but they are not chronicled on earth. So it mostly is : our business is to give the reader a tiresome string of facts, of jarrings, feuds and fightings, a very lifeless narrative ; yet the inner life, the life which makes the Saint an object of reverence and love,—this we are obliged to divine in our own rude way, and how unsatisfactory it is ! How little do we approach towards getting or giving an idea of what a Saint is, a just man canonized by the devotion of catholic generations ! Yet such a mass of facts and dates is not altogether secular ; there is edification in it ; that tarnished, common-place outside of things,—is it not the very selfsame tyranny under which we live ourselves to-day and to-morrow, and our sons shall live in morrows yet to come ? And Wilfrid, and a host of men such as he, sanctified themselves by such means as are open to ourselves ; and is there not edification in the vivid picturing of this plain fact unto ourselves,—edification haply as great as if we had to tell of inward struggles, heights of contemplation won, traits of ascetic humility and love, such as Cassian had to tell, or such as the monks of La Trappe fed upon in those old lives which make the

columns of Rosweide such a sweet treasure and endless recreation to a catholic mind ?

It was the year 691. Alfrid the Wise had now made trial of his old friend Wilfrid ; it was clear he was not the sort of man for him. Wisdom like Alfrid's is always beginning : statesmanship has nothing to do with growths : inquiries, commissions, projects, changes, reversals, re-organizations, and all manner of half-work, — statesmanship is competent to nothing more ; and this was Alfrid's line. He could not wait to see how things answered ; he created a public opinion, and then he had to feed it, and it is a hungry monster. Change of ministry, sessions, and acts of parliament,—he had not carrion of this sort ready at his hand ; but there was much which he could do. There was a system of things for him to attack, and Wilfrid to be got rid of ; indeed, that was only one work under two names, for Wilfrid was the soul of the system. Alfrid looked around him in the plenitude of his little wisdom, and he said, as gravely as might be, Of what good is the monastery of Ripon? Why, to Alfrid of absolutely none ; but it might be to others. But when a king asks a question, his tone of voice answers it affirmatively or negatively. Ripon was of no good ; the Witan shook their heads, and Ripon's fate was sealed. Something more energetic than prayer, fast, and vigil, must be had, and the revenues of those Benedictine drones, who did nothing but act the romance of living Christlike lives, must be applied—it is a pity Alfrid had not some mechanical improvement at hand — to a bishopric. True, there was the same awkward heavenliness about a bishopric ; yet there was something *visible*, and that is an immense comfort to the world which has not faith. Then, if they had a

bishopric, they must not have such impracticable men as Wilfrid. Settled, therefore, it is, that Ripon shall be secularized, shall have a bishop, and that that bishop shall be Eadhed. But Wilfrid objected to Alfrid's church views ; if a bishop were wanted there ever so much, it would be an evil precedent to suffer a king to create sees, spoil churches, and make experiments upon monasteries. But Alfrid had not quite the same power as the notorious Tudor, the great empiric in that way ; Wilfrid would not give way, and he had law, equity, and Rome so completely on his side, that Alfrid was obliged to cast about for some more available handle against the bishop. His statesmanship stood him in good stead, for he hit upon an expedient which served his turn exactly. Wilfrid obeyed and carried out the rules St. Theodore had passed for the government of the Northumbrian Church prior to Wilfrid's expulsion, and those also enacted subsequently, when Theodore and Wilfrid had been reconciled. But such decrees as were made in the intervening time Wilfrid took no notice of : St. Theodore's own confession, no less than the decree of Rome, had absolutely annulled them. But Theodore was dead, so no speedy appeal to him would clear Wilfrid ; and it was not hard for the royal statesman so to color things as to make it appear that Wilfrid had contumaciously refused to acknowledge the metropolitan jurisdiction of Canterbury. Without wearying the reader with the details of all the trickery, it is enough to say, that the matter ended in Wilfrid's exile once again. His heart was as strong as ever, though his years were multiplied ; he would have nothing to do with kingly interference in matters spiritual, so the lord abbot of Ripon took up his crosier, with his old, unfailing cheerfulness, and marched out of Alfrid's kingdom.

Wilfrid had but one want on earth, and that was hard work. It mattered not where he was, nor in what guise, provided only he was working for Christ. As an honored bishop in his own vast diocese, as the lord abbot of an extensive filiation of monasteries from the Tyne to the Nen, from the Ure to the Welland, as missionary among the rude Frisons, as a fisherman by the sea-side, and among the souls of Sussex, in chapter and in synod, in the pulpit and confessional, rebuking kings in palaces, and confirming children in villages,—it mattered not how or where, still, be it Christ's work, and Wilfrid's heart was in it, laboring with such a right good will, and such an energy of contentment, as is refreshing to behold, for all it is so humbling to us beholders. Wilfrid now found work in Mercia. St. Theodore's letter had quite disabused St. Ethelred's mind; he received the exiled bishop with open arms, and would have established him in one of the Mercian sees if he could. Putta had just died, but Tistellus had this same year been consecrated in his room, so that the see of Hereford was full; and for a year Wilfrid was obliged to live in ascetic seclusion, or in training and leading forward king Ethelred to those heights of Christian perfection which he afterwards attained. But his retirement was of no long duration. The next year, 692, Seculph, the bishop of Lichfield, died, and Wilfrid was appointed to the vacant see. Once St. Chad had entered into his labors; now he, by a strange revolution, was the successor of St. Chad. Others say, with less show of authority, that Leicester was the new diocese of Wilfrid, divided from Lichfield at Seculph's death. Leicester certainly does appear to have once been the seat of a bishop, and it is much to be desired that it were so now; but we incline to think St. Wil-

frid's new see was Lichfield, and not Leicester.³ In this same year we find Wilfrid ordaining the blessed Ostfor as coadjutor to Bosil bishop of Worcester, who was broken with age and many infirmities. Wilfrid's excuse for thus consecrating bishops was the vacancy of the see of Canterbury, St. Theodore being dead, and St. Bertwald not yet appointed. So, for twelve whole years, honored and beloved, Wilfrid dwelt among the Mercians, and for eleven years held peaceable possession of the see of Lichfield. Need we conjecture how his time was spent? Secret austerities dictated by the spirit of penance which shone forth so eminently in the humble-minded bishop, and outward indefatigable labors for the diocese and Mercian monasteries,—these were the two sides of Wilfrid's life. His will grew to be more and more conformed to the Will of God ; his faith, his hope, his love gained new accessions daily through the works of penitence and charity ; doubtless, too, raptures in prayer and extasies at mass, and gifts of strange fore-knowledge and celestial visions might be added : we know not : he lived the life of a Saint, therefore he was growing in sanctity day by day.

In 697 or 8, Wilfrid performed an episcopal act, which to him would be of a most touching nature, for it brought him once more into contact with his poor wild Frisons. Swibert had been one of his own subjects, a monk somewhere on the Scottish border. He was destined to be the apostle of Westphalia. In 690, he had sailed into Friesland, one of the mystic twelve, of whom St. Willebrord was the head. They landed at the mouth of the Rhine, the old scene of

³ However, see Carte and Wharton, ap. Peck, History of Stamford, ii. 36.

Wilfrid's labors; and soon after pope Sergius had consecrated Willebrord archbishop of Utrecht, Swibert was sent into England to be ordained a regional bishop, that is, without any fixed see. The chair of Canterbury was vacant: besides which, to whom would he go more naturally than to his old diocesan, whose name yet lingered among the rough people of the Rhenish swamps? He received, therefore, his consecration from Wilfrid; and well may we imagine the interesting conversations which would pass between the old and young bishop about the converted Frisons; well may we suppose that Swibert would seek for counsel from the lips of such a tried and able missionary as Wilfrid, one, too, who knew the temper and the ways of the kind-hearted savages of Friesland.

But from this happy scene of tranquil labor, our attention is now called to a sad scene of fraud and violence, a masterpiece of Alfrid's statesmanship: for worldly wisdom cannot long succeed unless it allies itself with wickedness; no difficult matter when there is such natural affinity between them. The new primate was St. Bertwald: he had been a monk at Glastonbury, and afterwards at Reculver, a holy contemplative, who edified the Saxon Church from his high place for seven and thirty years of austerest living. He was a scholar, too, but does not seem to have possessed either the erudition of St. Theodore, or his talent for governing. The first years of his primacy were in great measure occupied by the Church and kingdom of Kent, which had fallen into a lamentable state of tumult and misrule in the years which preceded the reign of Withred. Even after the Synod of Becancelde, much was to be done in carrying out his decrees, and years elapsed before the archbishop could actively

interfere in the ecclesiastical affairs of the north. The time and leisure came at last : it were better the holy man had been detained in Kent.

By some means or other, and probably in great measure by false representations, (for a lie saves statesmanship much troublesome ingenuity,) Alfrid gained St. Bertwald to his side, and inspired him with a jealousy and dislike of Wilfrid. The good bishop of York had been busy consoling Ethelred for the loss of his queen, king Egfrid's sister, who had been inhumanly murdered by the people of Lincoln and Nottingham : he had been witness, too, to a wondrous scene in the great abbey of Ely, the disinterring of St. Etheldreda by St. Sexburga, her sister and successor ; and it is chiefly on his testimony that the Church has received the pious belief of the incorruption of the blessed virgin's flesh. How wonderful a scene was that ! Go where we will, while Wilfrid is alive, and in almost all things which concern the Church, the bishop of York has a work to do : his biography is, if we except the internal regimen of the see of Canterbury, the history of the Saxon Church in his day. Meanwhile, Alfrid could not let him alone ; for a characteristic of statesmanship, the only feature about it which is not simply utilitarian, is an intense, pains-taking hatred of high principle. St. Bertwald, it appears, was anxious to execute the pope's decrees ; but Alfrid managed to procrastinate, and ultimately to prejudice the archbishop against Wilfrid. "As for Wilfrid," says the author of the Series Wilfridiana,⁴ "after he had now a long time exercised his office of a bishop up and down Mercia, in 703, at the desire of king Alfrid, Bertwald the archbishop called a general

⁴ Ap. Peck, ii. 38.

council of the bishops of all Britain to meet at Nestre-field, five miles north of Ripon, at which council Wilfrid was ordered to appear, and assurance given him, that, if he could prove he was really injured, he should have all imaginable reparation made for the wrong that he complained was done him. Well : he came, but met with none of the justice they promised him. For some bishops, indulging the king's humor, began presently to exasperate Wilfrid with false calumnies, and to provoke him with all the contradictions they were able. And when they could not prove what they objected with any show of reason, they at last added to their objections, that he would not submit a tittle to the decrees of archbishop Theodore. To whom answering, 'I did submit,' said he, 'to those decrees of Theodore which he promulg'd in peace, and with a canonical authority, and will in every particular obey them. Nevertheless, tell me how it is, that for two and twenty years ye can be disobedient to the letters sent from the Apostolic See, and so vehemently accuse me because I do not receive those institutions of Theodore which he did not compose by a canonical authority, but, as you yourselves very well know, by the dictates of discord.' Wilfrid, then, did not reckon they did him such an injury by dividing his bishopric into more sees, as that those prelates, to wit, Bosa and John, should exercise the episcopal function, who, according to Theodore's decree, indeed, but against Wilfrid's consent, (he being then unjustly banished,) were promoted to that high honor. For the Roman bishop's decree was that that diocese, being so large and wide, should be parted into more sees ; but that, nevertheless, was not to be done by mere archiepiscopal authority, but a council solemnly assembled, they being first deposed

who, in Wilfrid's absence, were, contrary to the canons, ordained bishops. This council, therefore, opposed itself to the Apostolic See, not for that it would part the diocese of York, but would itself confirm it to those bishops who held it by a violent and unjust intrusion. Meantime, a great many high words, without any reason in them, being retorted among them with a noise confused enough, a young man, belonging to the court, and well-known to Wilfrid, thrust himself into the crowd, and coming up to him, acquainted him with the meaning of the council's being in such a tumult. 'They design nothing,' said he, 'but to cozen you, by getting you, first of all, to set your own hand to stand to their judgments, whatever they decree; so that when you are once tied down by the band of confinement, you may never be able to alter anything afterwards; forasmuch as the result of their decree will be this: That you forfeit all that you at any time held in lands, bishoprics, monasteries, or any other quality, in the kingdom of the Northumbrians; and if you have procured anything in Mercia under king Ethelred, that you be forced to relinquish all that, by surrendering the whole to the archbishop, to be collated by him on whom he pleases: and lastly, that, by your own subscription, you be degraded from the honor of a bishop.'

"Understanding all this, when the bishops urged him to subscribe, Wilfrid stoutly and constantly refused to do so. But whom they could not trick by cunning, they presently attempted to oppress by force. Wherefore they passed sentence, that he should be divested of all that he had, and not hold so much as the smallest portion of any one little house or monastery, either in the kingdom of the Northumbrians or of the Mercians.

Nevertheless, when this resolution was divulged, his very enemies were seized with horror at the same, saying, that it was an impious thing, that a person every-way honorable should, without any certain crime being fixed on him, be stripped of all that he had. Whereupon the king and the archbishop, being desired by some about them, granted him the monastery which he had erected at Ripon, but on this condition, that he should there quietly sit down, and without the king's licence never go out of the bounds of that house, or any longer administer the office of a bishop, but that of himself he should renounce his rank of honor, and confirm it with the testimony of his own subscription. But the synod now demanding of him to give up his right, he acted like a most resolute prelate ; for he would not with one word spoil the labors of many years, and condemn the doctrine and rites which by his teaching the province had received." But let the Saint speak for himself, for his speech is given us by Eddi, and a noble one it is, and the precentor says that the old man of seventy delivered it with an intrepid voice : " Wherfore would ye compel me to turn against myself this sword of direful calamity, the subscription of my own condemnation ? Unworthy though I am, I have now borne the name of bishop these forty years, and shall I without any guilt make myself a suspected person now ? Since the first fathers whom holy Gregory sent, was not I the first to root out the evil plants of Scottish planting, and bring the Northumbrians back to the Easter and the tonsure of the Holy See ? Was I not the first to teach you how to sing like those of old, with double choirs, responsories, and antiphons ; and the very first to bring into these parts the monastic rule of the holy father Benedict ? And now must I condemn myself, conscious as I am of

no iniquity ? I appeal with all confidence to the Apostolic See : let the man who wishes to depose me accompany me thither to that judgment. Let the learned men of Rome know for what fault I am to be degraded before I consent thereto.”⁵

Time was when an appeal to Rome had elicited nothing but jeers from the Northumbrian court. But Rome’s power, the length and strength of her arm, were better known now : crowned cowards quailed before the eye of the old man in his white cassock on the Vatican. It was hatred now, baffled spite, outwitted statesmanship, which broke forth with all its puerile fury, when the name of Rome was pronounced aloud by that old and out-worn bishop. Surely the baseness and the turpitude of this wicked council need no comment ; yet it is useful to observe that the erastian bishops out-heroded Herod, they made their decree stronger than Alfrid wanted it, and so baffled him : thus it always is, the more a man foregoes his nature or betrays his office, the viler he becomes ; a wicked bishop becomes a very Satan : the lay nobles cry out against the blind passion of the decree. Alfrid surely might be disappointed : that council was to have been a master-piece, but lo ! it was a failure : and as to Bertwald, with what heart he went to vespers that evening we cannot tell. Deeply had Alfrid humbled him ; statesmanship had been too much for the pious contemplative. He would have been happier that night had he been a simple monk in his old cell at Reculver.

One thing, however, Bertwald did. Alfrid was for using violence, the only refuge of disconcerted statesmanship ; but the name of Rome had been pronounced, and the archbishop was resolute that Wilfrid should go forth

⁵ Eddi in Mabill. Act. Ben.

free. But the zeal of adulation has no bounds ; it becomes grotesque. The erastian bishops probably perceived how Alfrid the Wise was vexed because truth, simplicity, and firmness had been too much for him ; and they promulgated a decree excommunicating Wilfrid and his adherents. Nay, to such a disgraceful excess did their spite proceed, that if any of Wilfrid's abbots or monks sat at table and blessed the food set before him by signing the cross over it, they threw what he left to the dogs, and washed the vessels out of which he ate with the same ceremony as if they were polluted things ! Meanwhile, Wilfrid retired into Mercia, and related to St. Ethelred the proceedings of this tumultuous synod : the king was true to Wilfrid ; he expressed the greatest indignation and disgust at what had happened, and so far as he was concerned, pledged himself to keep Wilfrid's abbeys for him till his return.

What wonderful faith St. Wilfrid had in Rome ! What indomitable energy in himself ! The old Saxon bishop with threescore and ten years upon his back, and well-nigh twenty of laborious exile—he started for Rome with all the freshness of his impatient youth when first liberated from the Kentish court. His light burned clear to the last ; his had been a life of pure-thoughted abstinence, and therefore he had no old age. What a help cheerfulness is in religion, a real, genuine, unaffected mirth of heart, dwelling in its own sunshine, pure, humble, loving, and outpouring itself in all manner of courtesy and considerateness upon all who come within its reach. There is no magnanimity where there is not cheerfulness. Melancholy may be meditative and touching, but it cannot be magnanimous. There is something quite heroic about Wilfrid's cheerfulness ; it was the staff he walked with all his life long, up hill

and down, for his had been an uneven road ; it was the staff the old pilgrim leaned upon as he went forth all that long way to Rome. Why was it that no one ever heard a word from Wilfrid's lips of querulous complaint, of accusation of his enemies ? Why was it that in England, abroad, even before the Roman synods, the bishop was silent about his slanderers, and kept meekly to a bare defence of himself ? Why was it, but that he was a cheerful man, and hated sin with such a thorough hatred that he would not keep it in his mind to brood upon, even when it had so nearly concerned himself ? A man can do no work who is not cheerful ; and cheerfulness only flows from one fountain, an ascetic life. Shamefaced confession, daily examination of conscience, the interruption of canonical hours, fasting, watching, endurance of cold, voluntary discomforts, are all harsh-sounding words, and to worldly ears dead, unhelpful formalities ; yet of these comes cheerfulness. Elastic spirits spring from an examined conscience ; a disencumbered mind to think of and act for our neighbours is soon the growth of sacramental confession, which alone is our safeguard against morbid self-inspection. Love of God is the child of fasting, and to watch and to be cold gives a man such an on-looking disposition that he bursts easily from the fretting trammels and effeminate retardments of his "old self," which he durst not leave behind were he not conscious that he was doing works of penance which sufficiently provide for the memory of the past, for all such works cry *Amplius lava me* at all hours of the day. Thus, while on the modern system religion becomes a weak, delicate, sickly, timorous unnerving psychology, by the help of catholic austerities it is a keen, vigorous, masculine, self-forgetting, loving, hard-working, bright-faced, and light-hearted thing, de-

lightful to contemplate, as if it were in its measure a visible disclosure of the mercy and the justice of Him whose grace it is. But where is Christ in all this ? a man may say. Everywhere ; if men would know what it is to love Christ, they must read the lives of the austere Saints ; they threw themselves out of themselves into Him, and none but ascetics can do so. The love of God is the keeping of His commandments ; where then is that love when those commandments are decried as bondage ? The work of a Christian is the bearing of a Cross ; how is that work done when the Cross is laid aside ? Scanty churches, few priests, children uneducated, poor unrelieved, colonies unevangelized, the bridegroom gone, and yet no fasting ! St. Wilfrid might have asked, where is Christ in all this ? When the world is crucified to us, and we unto the world, we shall learn that the love of Christ is other than we deemed it. The world a Cross, we, each one separately, nailed thereon, or with manful hands in the act of nailing ourselves thereto, so that the world and we together make up the figure of a living Crucifix,—is this the fashion of our lives ? If not, let us fear God, and make haste along our way, asking of the Saints, whose lives were of such guise as that, how we may at length, not fear only, but likewise learn to love, and in the end win such a hope that we may have boldness even amid the affrighting pomp of Doomsday.

With a right merry heart and joyous trust, Wilfrid went forth to Rome ; it was about Christmas when he got there, his third visit and his last. A Greek then sat upon St. Peter's chair, John VI. "Thither, also," we are again quoting the author of the Series Wilfridiана, "were reached messengers from Bertwald, the archbishop, with his letters of accusation, humbly requesting

audience to be given them from that most glorious See, concerning the message whereon they were employed. But when pope John VI., with his bishops assembled from all parts, were come to the place where synods were then wont to be held, Wilfrid first presented a schedule of his petition to the synod, praying that the pontiff would vouchsafe to request Ethelred king of the Mercians (by the same instance of authority wherewith his predecessors Agatho, Benedict, and Sergius required it before) that no man might presume, through envy or wicked covetousness, to invade or take from him those monasteries with their appurtenances which were given him by king Ethelred himself, his brother Wulfere, or any other persons whatsoever, for the redemption of their souls. Likewise that he would entreat king Alfrid to fulfil all those things which his own predecessor Agatho had decreed. But if this should perchance seem hard to the king, [How little deserving the Saint's considerate humility!] that the bishopric of the city of York, with the monasteries which he held and were very many, might be bestowed at the pope's pleasure on whom he should think would best govern them ; and that only two monasteries, Ripon and Hexham, with all their lands and possessions, be restored to him. Pope John, when he heard these things, thought it necessary to examine what his predecessors had decreed in this affair. What helped to acquit Wilfrid at this time, as Bede himself tells us, was a reading of the acts of the Synod⁶ of pope Agatho, held when Wilfrid was the second time at Rome, and sitting in council among the bishops there. For when (as the cause⁷ required) the

⁶ Against the Monothelites.

⁷ Not Wilfrid's cause, but some other business.

acts of that synod were on some certain days read before the nobles and a multitude of others at the pope's command, they came at last to the place where it was written, 'Wilfrid, beloved of God, bishop of the city of York, appealing to the Apostolic See about his own business, and by authority of the same concerning matters certain and uncertain absolved, and set in the seat of judgment, with one hundred and twenty-five other bishops assembled in synod, professed, and with his subscription confirmed the true and catholic faith, for all the north part or islands of Britain and Ireland, which are inhabited by the nations of the English and Britons, together with the Picts and Scots.' When it was read, a great surprise seized the audience, and the reader stopping short, they began to inquire of one another, who that bishop Wilfrid was. Then Boniface, a counsellor of the pope's, and many others who had seen him there in pope Agatho's time, said, that he was the bishop who, being lately accused by his countrymen, was again come thither to be judged by the Apostolic See ; who being accused before, said they, and repairing hither, (the cause and controversy of both parties being presently after heard and adjudged,) was pronounced by pope Agatho to have been driven from his bishopric contrary to right, and had in so great esteem by him, that he would needs command him to take his place in a council of bishops which he assembled, as a person of an uncorrupt faith and an upright life. Which being heard, they all, together with the pontiff himself, said, A man of so great authority, who had been a bishop near forty years, ought by no means to be condemned, but being absolved entirely from the crimes whereof he was accused, should be returned with honor. Afterwards, one day, the synod being assembled, they commanded

Wilfrid's party and his accusers, who came from the archbishop, to appear. Whereupon his accusers first said, that bishop Wilfrid contumaciously opposing the canons of Bertwald, archbishop of Canterbury, and all Britain, (although these canons were decreed before a synod,) refused to submit to the same. To the substance of which accusation Wilfrid thus replied : ‘ I humbly and earnestly beseech your most excellent Holiness, that, condescending to so mean a person as I am, you will be pleased to hear the truth of this matter from me. For I was sitting in council⁸ with my own abbots, priests, and deacons, when they sent to me one of the bishops there assembled [*i. e.* with St. Bertwald] to ask me in the king's name, as also in the archbishop's, if I would submit to the sole determination of the archbishop himself, and was ready to comply with every particular he had decreed in his own private judgment, or not ? To this I answered the bishop who asked me, It were fitting we should first know what the sentence of his judgment is, before we can declare whether we are ready or no to submit to it. He then affirmed he did not know what it was himself ; nor would the archbishop, he said, by revealing it to any of us after any other manner, be willing to make known the full of his resolution, without we first, in open council, with our own hands would freely subscribe, that resolving to obey his sole judgment in all things, and no ways declining it, we will not depart a jot therefrom. I said, I never before now heard that a subscription so strict and full of confinement as this, was insisted upon by any man whatever ; that, being

⁸ Wilfrid seems here to be relating some stage of the proceedings prior to the iniquitous council at Nestrefield : his silence about that council is only another instance of his humility, self-restraint, and love of his persecutors.

bound as strongly as by an oath, he should promise to perform the decrees made, though requiring impossibilities ; and all this before he might know what they contained. Nevertheless, I replied there, before the assembly, that in all things wherein the archbishop's judgment appeared agreeable to the decrees of the holy fathers, and to precedents and canonical definitions, and in no wise differing from the synod of St. Agatho and the rest of his orthodox successors, we shall be found heartily ready to submit to it.' This tractable answer having produced in the Romans a joyful applause, his accusers were ordered to return home, the bishops saying, that though it was provided by the canons that every accuser who was found faulty in the first article of his charge should be heard no farther, they nevertheless, out of reverence for archbishop Bertwald, would not be wanting, but discuss everything in order thoroughly. Whereupon it came to pass, that within four months after there being held seventy little councils,⁹ solely or chiefly upon this account, they had all an end as glorious for Wilfrid, as ignominious for his accusers. In 704, therefore, the pope wrote to the kings Ethelred and Alfrid, and to the archbishop Bertwald, to restore him to his see. The bull which he sent to those kings ran thus :—

“ ‘ To the most eminent lords, Ethelred king of the Mercians, and Alfrid king of the provinces of Deira and Bernicia, John the Pope : We rejoice at the accessions, through God's working grace, of your excellent religion ; discerning the fervor of the faith in you, which, the Lord enlightening your souls, you received by the preaching of the Prince of the Apostles, and now

⁹ Conciliabula. Eddi Steph.

effectually retain, that a yet better accession may fulfil our joy. But the inextricable dissension of some hath afflicted our soul, and made sad the ears of our fellow-priests and the whole Church, which also, with the Lord's assistance, it behoves us to bring to correction, that not being despisers of the pontifical decrees, but obedient sons, ye may together be approved keepers of the pontifical decrees before the Lord, the Judge of all men. For long ago, when, under our predecessor pope Agatho, of apostolic memory, bishop Wilfrid, coming hither, appealed to the Apostolic See ; his adversaries, who then came hither from Theodore, of venerable memory, archbishop of the Church of Canterbury, and from the abbess Hilda, of religious memory, to accuse him, being present, the bishops from divers provinces being with the above-named holy pope here likewise assembled, regularly inquired into the allegations of both parties, and sententially decreed between them : which same sentence his successors, the holy popes our predecessors, thought good to follow. Neither was the prelate Theodore, of venerable memory, (who was sent from this Apostolic See,) ever known afterwards to contradict what was done, or send any farther accusation to this Apostolic See ; but rather, as hath appeared, both from what he declared and by the pontifical decrees, submitted to that sentence. It were, therefore, with God's assistance, to be prevented, that no dissension be upheld in one place, whilst everywhere else there is a perfect unanimity both of fellow-priests and people. So much we have thought good to premise concerning affairs past. Touching present matters also we have judged proper to make known to your Christian excellencies, that those who have come hither from the said isle of Britain, and brought accusations against

bishop Wilfrid, he afterwards arriving here with his brethren, they have retorted upon his accusers the very things which they accused him of ; whose differences we have for some days procured to be heard before a convention of bishops and priests, who happened to be at present here ; before whom all the particulars whatever, which the parties have either in former or fresh writings brought in charge, or they could here find, or was verbally alleged by them, being carefully discussed, have been brought to our cognition ; till they, the principal persons among whom the contention hath arisen, shall meet together, who, to put an end to all disputes, ought to assemble and sit in council. And, therefore, we admonish Bertwald, prelate of the holy Church of Canterbury, our most reverend brother, (whom, by authority of the Prince of the Apostles, we have confirmed archbishop there,) to call a synod, together with bishop Wilfrid ; and a council being regularly celebrated, that he cause the bishops Bosa and John to come into the synod ; and that he hear what both parties have to say, and consider what they are among themselves willing to agree to ; and if so be that by his management he shall be able to determine this regularly at the synod, he does a grateful thing to us and the parties. But, if it otherwise fall out, let him synodically admonish them, that upon his admonitions each party may consider what things will be most convenient for themselves ; and then let them come together to this Apostolic See, that what hath not hitherto been determined may be debated and decided in a fuller council ; and so they who come in discord may, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, return in peace. Likewise, let every one of them who shall refuse or, what is to be execrated, despise to come, know that he

ought to submit himself to a dejection, and be thrown hence, and not received there by any of the prelates or faithful. For he who hath lived disobedient to Christ his Author, cannot be received among His ministers and disciples. Moreover, let your Christian and royal highnesses, for the fear of God and reverence and peace of the Christian faith, which the Lord Jesus Christ gave to His disciples, cause a speedy meeting and concurrence in this affair ; that these things, of which, by God's inspiration, we have a thorough insight, may take effect ; that, for your religious endeavours of this sort, there may be laid up for you a reward in Heaven, and that Christ being your protector, you may in this world reign safely, and at length enjoy the blessed society of His eternal kingdom. Wherefore, my most dear sons, remember what the most blessed Agatho, and the rest of the prelates of the Roman Church after him, together with us, in one voice, by apostolic authority, have ordained in this same affair. For be he who he will, who with audacious rashness shall despise what we have done, he shall not go unpunished by God, or, being debarred from Heaven, escape without loss. The Most High Grace keep safe your eminences.””

Never was there upon earth a tribunal so august as that of Rome ! While in the local Churches, party-spirit and factious tumult, the wrath of kings and the strife of prelates, keep all things in effervescence, the patient discernment, the devout tranquillity of deliberation, the unimpassioned disentanglement of truth from falsehood, the kindly suspense, the saintly moderation without respect of persons, the clear-voiced utterance of the decree at last,—how wonderful were all these things in the court of Rome ! With profoundest

reverence be it spoken, did not this tribunal faintly shadow forth the imperturbed peace, long-suffering, merciful delay yet loving promptitude of the Divine judgments? Earth trembled and was still: for many a century was this true of Rome; surely it was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Seventy councils held to sift, to balance, to compare, to adjust what might seem a petty strife in a far-off diocese of a little island! Wilfrid might well have faith in Rome, might well go through all he did to teach his Saxon countrymen the like consoling and reverential trust. The aged Wilfrid—he had *walked* great part of the way to Rome, for all his three-score years and ten: he had walked, at least, from those litora australia of which Eddi speaks; he had gone *pedestri gressu* over rough and smooth, till he came to the pope's feet, and there he knelt down—fit resting-place, indeed, for a toil-worn Saint. Now he had his journey over again; but first,—Wilfrid forgot not that,—there were the basilicas and holy places to visit for devotion; we have particular reasons for knowing that he had a singular love of those two basilicas Sta. Maria Maggiore, and San Paolo, of which last, in better days, the English sovereigns were the keepers, when St. Paul had not been set against St. Peter. Again did Wilfrid, covetous old man! beg relics to take to his dear England, and purple and silk for the frontals of the altars and the chasubles of the priests; and ample chasubles (not the mean clipped chasubles of our times) St. Wilfrid's priests no doubt had: he would not be sparing of his silk, for he was given to magnificence, like Hugh of Clugny, or Suger of St. Denys. Obedient as he was to St. Benedict in most things, Wilfrid would have been a perfect sophist if any one

had urged holy poverty in Church adornments. Once, again, over rough and smooth, (*per plana et aspera,*) but Eddi does not say *pedestri gressu*, Wilfrid, with his selfsame staff of cheerfulness, trudged like a sturdy pilgrim back to his native land. In years past, St. Theodore had forced a horse upon him, and now pope John had forbidden the cold water at night, and otherwise retrenched the old man's austerities. But Wilfrid endured this, as he did most things, with an on-looking cheerfulness.

The Alps were cleared, and Wilfrid came at last to Meaux. Meaux and its vicinity had long been noted for hospitality to us western islanders. Agneric had received St. Columban as a guest at his seat of Champigne, in Brie, two leagues from Meaux. This was in 610. St. Faro was Agneric's son, and he was made bishop of Meaux in 626, and having peopled his diocese with Saints, earned by his own ascetic life the honors of canonization himself. In was in St. Faro's palace at Meaux that the abbot Adrian spent his winter, while St. Theodore was the guest of Agilbert at Paris. It was to this city of Meaux that Wilfrid came. The stout-hearted old man was manifestly broken with travel ; his heart never failed him ; indeed his body had been leaning on his spirit this long while ; now it could go no further, and the bishop lay down to die. True, he had ridden from Rome this time, but three-score years and ten require an easier seat than a saddle day after day, for many a weary league. Let St. Bede tell the rest ;¹ "Passing through France, on his way back to Britain, on a sudden he fell sick, and the distemper increasing, was so

¹ V. 19. Dr. Giles's Translation.

ill that he could not ride, but was carried in his bed. Being thus come to the city of Meaux, in France, he lay four days and nights, as if he had been dead, and only by his faint breathing showed that he had any life in him ; having continued so four days, without meat or drink, speaking or hearing, he at length, on the fifth day, in the morning, as it were awakening out of a dead sleep, sat up in the bed, and opening his eyes, saw numbers of brethren singing and weeping about him, and fetching a sigh, asked where Acca the priest was ? This man, being called, immediately came in, and seeing him thus recovered and able to speak, knelt down, and returned thanks to God, with all the brethren there present. When they had sat awhile, and begun to discourse with much reverence on the heavenly judgments, the bishop ordered the rest to go out for an hour, and spoke to the priest Acca in this manner : ‘An awful vision has now appeared to me, which I wish you to hear and keep secret, till I know how God will please to dispose of me. There stood by me a certain person, remarkable for his white garments, telling me he was Michael the archangel, and said, I am sent to save you from death : for the Lord hath granted you life, through the prayers and tears of the disciples, and the intercession of His Blessed Mother Mary of perpetual virginity ; wherefore I tell you, that you shall now recover from this sickness ; but be ready, for I will return to visit you at the end of four years. But when you come into your country, you shall recover most of the possessions that have been taken from you, and shall end your days in perfect peace.’ The bishop accordingly recovered, at which all persons rejoiced, and setting forward on his journey arrived in Britain.”

Doubtless the cause of St. Wilfrid's revealing this secret vision to St. Acca only, (who had been brought up by St. Bosa, yet now followed Wilfrid,) was partly the blessed Saint's profound humility, and partly his uncertainty whether it might not have been an illusion, and then, if falsified by the event, the knowledge of it might have created in others either profaneness or distrust. Those who receive Divine favors of any sort are usually men little inclined to publish them—even ordinary Christians can understand why this should be. What more humbling, more unspeakably humbling, than an answered prayer? yet the love it stirs breeds, not vocal thanks or hearty utterance, but a breathless hush, because of the Lord's recent nearness to us, or touch upon us.

“Wilfrid,” says Eddi, “washed his face and hands with much hilarity,” and took some food, and in a few days journeyed to the sea, and, after a prosperous voyage, landed in Kent. St. Bertwald received the papal decrees with becoming reverence, undertook to reverse the harsh judgments of the former synod, and was unfeignedly reconciled to Wilfrid. All this was as it should be. Then there was a regular gathering of Wilfrid’s abbots in London, and great rejoicings : this too is refreshing to read of. Then the old man went northwards, not to *King*, but to *Saint*, Ethelred, for he was now a monk at Bardney ; Wilfrid had had a hand in this ; and when he saw his royal friend, crowned with a catholic tonsure, he wept for joy, and there was kissing and embracing, which Eddi tells us of in a most complacent way ; and Kenred, whom Ethelred had made king, promised to observe the Roman decrees, and to restore Wilfrid all his abbeys inviolate. And this, too, was as it should be : for Ethelred, when the pope’s

letter was given him, received it on his knees, and that, beyond a doubt, had been a lesson from his friend Wilfrid. But Alfrid, the statesman, he was sullen, as most men are when they have been outwitted. Wilfrid sent to him Badwin a priest, and Alufrid the schoolmaster at Ripon : Alfrid received them mildly, and fixed a time when they should come for his answer. He refused to obey the pope's decree, or admit Wilfrid ; he was determined to have the best of it to the last. But the statesman, Alfrid the Wise, had never done a sillier thing than disobey the commands of Rome. The pope's letter had ended with a warning, and the warnings of the Church, unheeded, grow into maledictions. The messengers of Wilfrid turned their backs on Driffield, a village by the river Hull in Yorkshire ; and as soon as they were gone, the king was seized with a sore disease, and lost the use of all his limbs. Finding himself at death's door, he sent for the abbesses Elfleda and Edilburga, and confessed his sin in thus malignantly persecuting Wilfrid, in their presence and before other witnesses, adding, "If Wilfrid could have come soon enough to me, on my sending for him, I would immediately have made amends for my offence. For I had vowed to God and St. Peter, if I had got well of this infirmity, to observe all things according to the holy Wilfrid's mind, and the judgment of the Apostolic See. But, as it pleases God I shall die, I require, in the Name of God, whoever succeeds me, to make peace and agreement with bishop Wilfrid for the peace of mine and his own soul." So Alfrid died. Had he thrown his wisdom upon the side of God's Church, what might not this royal scholar have done for the north ; as it was, his reign left no trace behind ; he squandered his talents in persecut-

ing a bishop, in order to free the state from the salutary restraints of the Church, and the bishop outwitted the scholar in his craft, called in Rome, and Rome beat the king to the ground. The same edifying drama has been enacted over and over again for the instruction of the world : yet states are slow learners : they die before their nonage is past ; while the Church remains old in years and wisdom, young in power and freshness.

Alfrid died in 705, and Eadulf succeeded him. To him Wilfrid came, accompanied by the king's own son, who appears to have been receiving his education in the monastery of Ripon, sending messengers before him. But the king's counsellors were strong and well : they derided the death-bed repentance of the late monarch ; they deemed his intellect enfeebled by disease. By their advice, Eadulf answered Wilfrid's messengers austerity, and said, "I swear by my life, if he does not depart my kingdom in six days' time, as many of his companions as I find shall be put to death." But the malediction in no long while found out Eadulf also. A conspiracy was raised against him by the nobility, for he was a usurper, and he was deposed and slain in two months. Then Osred, Alfrid's son, succeeded ; and St. Bertwald called a council on the Nid, and Wilfrid was there, and Bosa, and John of Beverley, and Eadbert of Lindisfarne, five canonized Saints, at that time enemies : and the archbishop spoke, and said that Rome must be obeyed ; and Bosa, and John, and Eadbert opposed, and Elfleda testified to Alfrid's dying words. St. Wilfrid was humble, and outworn, and he knew the number of his days ; and he gave up his bishoprics, for his battle was won, and he had not fought it for himself, but for a principle which that day, on

the banks of the Nid, men bowed to in fear and reverence. And Berectfrid, a great noble, spoke, and said that, in the siege of Bamborough, when they were in straits, and Eadulf's men pressed them hard, they vowed, if they should conquer, to follow Alfrid's dying words, and obey the See of Rome. And Wilfrid asked for his abbeys of Ripon and of Hexham, and would have no more ; and they gave him what he asked. And the adverse bishops kissed one another, and mass was sung by the Nid side, and the communion was not one of form only, but of heart also,—a shadow, yet a truthful shadow, of that unimaginable communion which now is in Heaven between those beatified spirits St. Bertwald, St. Wilfrid, St. Bosa, St. John of Beverley, St. Eadbert, and St. Elfleda ; by whose helpful intercession may we be aided now in the forlornness of our fight !

Wilfrid now prepared himself to die, according to the warning given him by the Captain of the Heavenly Hosts. He appears to have spent his time, as was natural, between the abbeys of Hexham and of Ripon. Sorrow follows joy ; or, as Eddi expresses it, when he has glowingly described the communion of the bishops, *laetitia hujus saeculi luctu miscebitur, et omnis res ad finem respicit.* But one thing remains to be said : we have not alluded to St. Wilfrid's doctrines. The blessed pope, St. Agatho, thought it of importance that Wilfrid should subscribe the acts of the Roman Council against the Monothelites as representing the faith of the Church of *northern* England ; it may be well to advert for a while, then, to what this great man taught the Saxons of his day. Seeing that he gave up his life to the great work of asserting the Divine authority of Rome, we may be sure his

doctrine was simply and purely that of the holy Roman Church in the seventh century. Yet it is interesting to gather up the few indications of it given us in St. Bede. We have already seen, in the heavenly vision at Meaux, the potency of our blessed Lady's intercession authenticated in a very solemn way, even by the mouth of the great Archangel. There is a story, too, connected with the battle in which the young prince Elfwin was slain, according to Wilfrid's prediction, wherein we are told of a chained prisoner, whose chains miraculously fell off at a certain hour every day, namely, the hour of tierce, which was then the ordinary time for mass ; and it was found that his brother, a priest, believing him dead, did actually say mass for the repose of his soul daily at that hour ; and universal belief coupled the two things. Looking at it simply as something to which men gave credence, whether fact or not, the story shews that the practice of saying mass *with a particular intention*, was common in the Saxon Church of that age ; and that so great was the reverence for the Blessed Sacrifice, that men readily believed in miraculous consequences following. But there is a narrative of the year 696, when Wilfrid was acting as bishop of Lichfield, which belongs to Wilfrid's own diocese, and throws light on some interesting and debated questions, which almost all serious persons must have turned their minds to more or less, as relating to the fortunes of their own souls, and what doing or suffering may yet lie before them. We will give the story in St. Bede's own words, again putting it forward as, whether fact or not, something undoubtedly *historical* because it was believed, and so *historically* testifying to the belief the men of Wilfrid's diocese had about such matters. In itself, and as coming from St. Bede, some,

perhaps, will get solemn thoughts from it, and so be edified.

"At this time a memorable miracle,² and like to those of former days, was wrought in Britain ; for, to the end that the living might be saved from the death of the soul, a certain person, who had been some time dead, rose again to life, and related many remarkable things he had seen ; some of which I have thought fit here briefly to take notice of. There was a master of a family in that district of the Northumbrians which is called Cuningham, who led a religious life, as did also all that belonged to him. This man fell sick, and his distemper daily increasing, being brought to extremity, he died in the beginning of the night : but in the morning early, he suddenly came to life again, and sat up ; upon which all those that sat about the body, weeping, fled away in a great fright, only his wife, who loved him best, though in a great consternation and trembling, remained with him. He, comforting her, said, 'Fear not, for I am now truly risen from death, and permitted again to live among men ; however, I am not to live hereafter as I was wont, but from henceforward after a very different manner.' Then rising immediately, he repaired to the oratory of the little town, and continuing in prayer till day, immediately divided all his substance into three parts ; one whereof he gave to his wife, another to his children, and the third belonging to himself, he instantly distributed among the poor. Not long after he repaired to the monastery of Melros, which is almost enclosed by the winding of the river Twede ; and having been shaven, went into a private dwelling, which the abbot had provided, where he continued till the day of his death, in

² Bede, v. 13. Giles's Translation. A modern catholic historian considers it as a trance, not as death.

such extraordinary contrition of mind and body, that though his tongue had been silent, his life declared that he had seen many things either to be dreaded or coveted, which others knew nothing of.

“ Thus he related what he had seen. ‘ He that led me had a shining countenance and a bright garment, and we went on silently, as I thought, towards the north-east. Walking on, we came to a vale of great breadth and depth, but of infinite length : on the left it appeared full of dreadful flames ; the other side was no less horrid for violent hail and cold snow flying in all directions. Both places were full of men’s souls, which seemed by turns to be tossed from one side to the other, as it were by a violent storm ; for when the wretches could no longer endure the excess of heat, they leaped into the middle of the cutting cold ; and finding no rest there, they leaped back again into the middle of the unquenchable flames. Now whereas an innumerable multitude of deformed spirits were thus alternately tormented far and near, as far as could be seen, without any intermission, I began to think that this perhaps might be hell, of whose intolerable flames I had often heard talk. My guide, who went before me, answered to my thought, saying, ‘ Do not believe so, for this is not the hell you imagine.’

“ ‘ When he had conducted me, much frightened with that horrid spectacle, by degrees, to the farther end, on a sudden I saw the place begin to grow dusk and filled with darkness. When I came into it, the darkness, by degrees, grew so thick, that I could see nothing besides it and the shape and garment of him that led me. As we went on through the shades of night, on a sudden there appeared before us frequent globes of black flames rising as it were out of a great pit, and falling back again

into the same. When I had been conducted thither, my leader suddenly vanished, and left me alone in the midst of darkness and this horrid vision, whilst those same globes of fire, without intermission, at one time flew up and at another fell back into the bottom of the abyss ; and I observed that all the flames, as they ascended, were full of human souls, which, like sparks flying up with smoke, were sometimes thrown on high, and again, when the vapour of the fire ceased, dropped down into the depth below. Moreover, an insufferable stench came forth with the vapours, and filled all those dark places.

“ Having stood there a long time in much dread, not knowing what to do, which way to turn, or what end I might expect, on a sudden I heard behind me the noise of a most hideous and wretched lamentation, and at the same time a loud laughing, as of a rude multitude insulting captured enemies. When that noise, growing plainer, came up to me, I observed a gang of evil spirits dragging the howling and lamenting souls of men into the midst of the darkness, whilst they themselves laughed and rejoiced. Among those men, as I could discern, there was one shorn like a clergyman, a layman, and a woman. The evil spirits that dragged them went down into the midst of the burning pit ; and as they went down deeper, I could no longer distinguish between the lamentation of the men and the laughing of the devils, yet I still had a confused sound in my ears. In the meantime, some of the dark spirits ascended from that flaming abyss, and running forward, beset me on all sides, and much perplexed me with their glaring eyes and the stinking fire which proceeded from their mouths and nostrils ; and threatened to lay hold on me with burning tongs, which they had in their hands, yet they

durst not touch me, though they frightened me. Being thus on all sides enclosed with enemies and darkness, and looking about on every side for assistance, there appeared behind me, on the way that I came, as it were, the brightness of a star shining amidst the darkness ; which increased by degrees, and came rapidly towards me : when it drew near, all those evil spirits that sought to carry me away with their tongs, dispersed and fled.

“ He, whose approach put them to flight, was the same that had led me before ; who, then turning towards the right, began to lead me, as it were, towards the south-east, and having soon brought me out of the darkness, conducted me into an atmosphere of clear light. While he thus led me in open light, I saw a vast wall before us, the length and height of which, in every direction, seemed to be altogether boundless. I began to wonder why we went up to the wall, seeing no door, window, or path through it. When we came to the wall, we were presently, I know not by what means, on the top of it, and within it was a vast and delightful field, so full of fragrant flowers that the odour of its delightful sweetness immediately dispelled the stink of the dark furnace, which had pierced me through and through. So great was the light in this place, that it seemed to exceed the brightness of the day, or the sun in its meridian height. In this field were innumerable assemblies of men in white, and many companies seated together rejoicing. As he led me through the midst of these happy inhabitants, I began to think that this might, perhaps, be the kingdom of heaven, of which I had often heard so much. He answered to my thought, saying, ‘ This is not the kingdom of heaven, as you imagine.’

“ When we had passed those mansions of blessed souls and gone farther on, I discovered before me a much more

beautiful light, and therein heard sweet voices of persons singing, and so wonderful a fragrancy proceeded from the place, that the other which I had before thought most delicious, then seemed to me but very indifferent ; even as that extraordinary brightness of the flowery field, compared with this, appeared mean and inconsiderable. When I began to hope we should enter that delightful place, my guide, on a sudden, stood still ; and then turning back, led me back by the way we came.

“ ‘ When we returned to those joyful mansions of the souls in white, he said to me, ‘ Do you know what all these things are which you have seen ? ’ I answered I did not ; and then he replied, ‘ That vale you saw so dreadful for consuming flames and cutting cold, is the place in which the souls of those are tried and punished, who, delaying to confess and amend their crimes, at length have recourse to repentance at the point of death, and so depart this life ; but nevertheless because they, even at their death, confessed and repented, they shall all be received into the kingdom of heaven at the day of judgment ; but many are relieved before the day of judgment, by the prayers, alms, and fasting of the living, and more especially by masses. That fiery and stinking pit which you saw, is the mouth of hell, into which whosoever falls shall never be delivered to all eternity. This flowery place, in which you see these most beautiful young people, so bright and merry, is that into which the souls of those are received who depart the body in good works, but who are not so perfect as to deserve to be immediately admitted into the kingdom of heaven ; yet they shall all, at the day of judgment, see Christ, and partake of the joys of His kingdom ; for whoever are perfect in thought, word and deed, as soon as

they depart the body, immediately enter into the kingdom of heaven ; in the neighbourhood whereof that place is, where you heard the sound of sweet singing, with the fragrant odour and bright light. As for you, who are now to return to your body, and live among men again, if you will endeavour nicely to examine your actions, and direct your speech and behaviour in righteousness and simplicity, you shall, after death, have a place of residence among these joyful troops of blessed souls ; for when I left you for a while, it was to know how you were to be disposed of.' When he had said this to me, I much abhorred returning to my body, being delighted with the sweetness and beauty of the place I beheld, and with the company of those I saw in it. However, I durst not ask him any questions ; but in the meantime, on a sudden, I found myself alive among men.'

" Now these and other things which this man of God saw, he would not relate to slothful persons and such as lived negligently ; but only to those who, being terrified with the dread of torments, or delighted with the hopes of heavenly joys, would make use of his words to advance in piety. In the neighbourhood of his cell lived one Hemgils, a monk, eminent in the priesthood, which he honored by his good works : he is still living, and leading a solitary life in Ireland, supporting his declining age with coarse bread and cold water. He often went to that man, and asking several questions, heard of him all the particulars of what he had seen when separated from his body ; by whose relation we also came to the knowledge of those few particulars which we have briefly set down. He also related his visions to king Alfrid, a man most learned in all respects, and was by him so willingly and attentively heard, that at his request he was admitted into the monastery above mentioned, and

received the monastic tonsure ; and the said king, when he happened to be in those parts, very often went to hear him. At that time the religious and humble abbot and priest, Ethelwald, presided over the monastery, and now with worthy conduct possesses the episcopal see of the church of Lindisfarne.

“ He had a more private place of residence assigned him in that monastery, where he might apply himself to the service of his Creator in continual prayer. And as that place lay on the bank of the river, he was wont often to go into the same to do penance in his body, and many times to dip quite under the water, and to continue saying psalms or prayers in the same as long as he could endure it, standing still sometimes up to the middle, and sometimes to the neck in water ; and when he went out from thence ashore, he never took off his cold and frozen garments till they grew warm and dry on his body. And when in the winter the half-broken pieces of ice were swimming about him, which he had himself broken to make room to stand or dip himself in the river, those who beheld it would say, ‘ It is wonderful, brother Drithelm, [for so he was called,] that you are able to endure such violent cold ; ’ he simply answered, for he was a man of much simplicity and indifferent wit, ‘ I have seen greater cold.’ And when they said, ‘ It is strange that you will endure such austerity ; ’ he replied, ‘ I have seen more austerity.’ Thus he continued, through an indefatigable desire of heavenly bliss, to subdue his aged body with daily fasting, till the day of his being called away ; and he forwarded the salvation of many by his words and example.”

We know from Holy Scripture that God has been pleased to teach His servants by visions and dreams : we will not leave this story of brother Drithelm stand-

ing by itself. Thus a conversion to a godly life was worked in what was perhaps a trance in the seventh century ; and thus, to pass onward to the ninth, dreamed the great St. Anscar, the apostle of Scandinavia, during his noviciate at Old Corbey,—a dream which, the historian says, had great influence over his future life. In his sleep he thought he was dying, while invoking the aid of St. Peter and St. John ;³

“ And when, as it seemed to him, his soul left his body, and assumed one of far greater beauty,—one free from human imperfections,—at that moment there appeared the two just mentioned. One of them, much older than the other, with plain, silvery, yet close-set hair, with a ruddy countenance, yet serious look, with a garment white and coloured, of a low stature, he easily recognised as St. Peter. The other, much taller and younger, bearded and curly-haired, with a thin, yet smiling countenance, and in an embroidered vestment, he also intuitively knew as St. John. They placed themselves at each side of him. And his soul, as he thought, being wonderfully conducted by those Saints, proceeded, without effort, through the immense light which filled the universe, until it arrived at a place which by intuition he certainly knew to be purgatory, where his conductors left him. There he sustained many grievous things, the chief of which seemed impenetrable darkness, heavy oppression and suffocation ; and though his memory failed him as to the details of his situation, he yet remembered enough to wonder how such pain could exist. And having been tormented, as he thought, about three days,—which space, such was the extreme severity of his suffering, appeared to

³ Dunham, ii. 207.

him a thousand years,⁴—the two Saints reappeared, took their stations by him, and with countenances much more joyful than before, they conducted him much more delightfully through greater splendour, without motion and without path. To use his own words, ‘I saw long ranks of Saints, some near, some in the distant ether, stretching from the east, yet looking towards it; praising Him who appeared in the east, adoring Him, some with bowed heads, others with erect countenances and open hands. And when we came to the east, behold twenty-four elders, sitting, according as it is written in the Apocalypse, on their thrones, with an ample space before them; these, also, looking reverently towards the east, uttered unspeakable praises to the Lord. And as they thus sang, the ineffable harmony and sweetness penetrated into my soul; yet, on my return to the body, I lost the impression. In that east was a wonderful splendour, a light inaccessible, dazzling, and boundless, in which was contained every lovely colour, and every delight; and all the legions of Saints who stood rejoicing around it, derived happiness from it. And this splendour was so boundless, that I could discern neither the beginning nor end. And even when I was able to look at it a little more narrowly, I could not discern the inward recesses of

⁴ So it is related in the life of San Francesco di Geronimo, that he said to a nun somewhat impatient in sickness, that possibly her soul would be purified by it, and she would have a shorter time to stay in purgatory. Soon after her death the Saint asked another of the sisterhood how long it was since that nun had died. She answered, two days. Upon which, as if some revelation had been made to him, he cried out, Oh le gravi pene del Purgatorio! È venuto a dolersi meco colei di non essere stata mantenuta la parola del breve patire; giacchè da più anni è tormentata in quel carcere. *De Bonis. Ristret. Storic.* p. 16.

that immense glory, but the surface only ; yet could I believe Him to be present, ‘on whom,’ according to St. Peter, ‘angels desire to look :’ for from Him proceeded that consuming brightness in which the angelic legions were clothed. He appeared to be in all, and all in Him : outwardly He surrounded all ; inwardly all were sustained and governed by Him ; above He protected them, below He upheld them. There was no sun or moon, no heaven or earth. Yet this glory was not of that species which pains and blinds ; it was, on the contrary, most agreeable to the eyes. And when I said that the elders were sitting, I might have said, they all sat in Him ; for there was nothing corporeal, but all was incorporeal, though the form was bodily, —all ineffably beautiful. The glory proceeding from Him encompassed them about like the rainbow. And when I was brought by the said Apostles before that immensity of glory, where the majesty of the Highest seemed to be, a Voice, indescribably sweet, yet awfully distinct, capable of pervading all space, said unto me, ‘Depart, and when thou hast won the martyr’s crown, return unto Me !’ At these words the concourse of Saints, hitherto sweetly singing, were silent, and worshipped with subdued looks.”

On these two narratives no comment shall be made, further than to remind the reader, that God is ever with His Church ; and who shall circumscribe His ways, or limit the *fashion* of His doings ?

Some time in the year 707, an abbot was travelling on horseback, attended by a few monks, on his road from Hexham to Ripon. The old man did not sit upright on his horse, but stooped very much ; rode with evident pain, and any passer by might have told that he was paralytic. In truth, the abbot was seventy-

three years old, and the cold, and hunger, and watching of a monk's life may well go for another score of years ; so that the abbot had reason to stoop sadly as he went. Apparently, he was well known upon that road between Hexham and Ripon ; the peasants left their labor as he passed, to beg his blessing : women knelt in the mire, and lifted up their little ones, content if so be the eye of the lord abbot fell upon them, and he signed the Cross over the people as he went. Then at times the old man fell into a reverie : he was riding among the green lanes of Yorkshire, but in thought he was treading the streets of magnificent Rome. One by one he was visiting the holy places : he was kneeling now at the double tomb upon the Vatican, and then he was skirting the Prati del Popolo Romano, and through the gate to the basilica of St. Paul, and his thoughts dwelt there long ; and then outside the walls he went, scarcely lifting up his eyes to look at the blue ridge of the Latin hills, till he came to St. Sebastian's, which stands above the Catacombs ; and after that he passed onward to the Lateran, the Mother Church of all the world, the cathedral of Rome. His next pilgrimage was not long, for down the avenue of trees he could see the basilica of Holy Cross, and thinking of St. Helena, he went there too : he visited St. Laurence's also, which looks toward the Sabine hills, and then returning into the Holy City, he rested long on that hill-top where St. Mary Major's stands, for that was the church the lord abbot loved most of all ; it was his haven in the tumults of noisy Rome. So the abbot dreamed, and prayed, and dreamed again. He saw not the Yorkshire lanes ; he smelled not the golden furze on the green commons ; the open glade, the tangled copse, the dewy fern, the starting deer, the pebbly stream,

the soft-voiced cushat,—he neither heard nor saw such things as these, for the lord abbot was in Rome.

The oak, the ash, the bonny ivy tree,
They flourish best at hame i' the north countrie.

But it was the cypress and the palm which the abbot saw, the black spires and the fan-like leaves mixing with many a Roman campanile. It was there that I found justice, said he, half aloud ; it is there I will go to pass the little remnant of my days, and weep for my many sins. The monks heard, but they interrupted not. So St. Wilfrid rode on, still in Rome : but in no long time he fell forward on his horse's neck ; it was another fit, a second seizure of paralysis, such as he had had at Meaux. Speechless, and without motion, he was borne to a house by his monks. Bad news fly fast ; abbots came, and priests, and monks, and they surrounded Wilfrid's bed, and prayed, and God heard their prayers, and the abbot's life was spared for a little while longer. But Wilfrid knew that St. Michael's coming would not be long delayed ; so he came to Ripon, and began to set his house in order. The lord abbot was poor in spirit, as ever Saint could be ; but the meek man, according to the promise, had inherited the earth.

Two abbots, and some brethren chosen for their faithfulness, were bidden to open the treasury, and bring out the gold, and silver, and the precious stones, and lay them before his eyes. A strange sight, surely, for a dying Saint ! but it was not to feed his eyes with pride, as Hezekiah had done when he paraded the ambassador through his treasure-house. The brethren were bidden to divide the goods into four heaps ; then the lord abbot sat up, and spake thus :⁵ “Know, my dearest

⁵ Eddi Steph. lix.

brethren, that it hath been some while my thought to see once more the seat of St. Peter, where my wrongs were redressed, and, God willing, to finish my life there; and I would take with me the best of these four heaps and offer it at the churches of St. Mary the Lord's Mother, and St. Paul the Apostle, for the weal of my soul. But if God should provide otherwise, (and old men's plans are oft-times frustrated,) and if the hour of my death should be beforehand with me, I charge you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, to send my gifts to those churches. Of the other three heaps, give one to the poor for the redemption of my soul ; and another let the priors of Ripon and Hexham divide between them, that by gifts they may win kindness from kings and bishops ; and the last do ye give as portions to those who have borne laborious company with me in my long exiles.” Then the lord abbot paused to take breath, for he was weak, and his few words had wearied him, and haply a gush of affectionate memories made his heart swell, when he spoke of the companions of his exile. But he gathered up his strength again, and said, “Remember, brethren, that I appoint the priest Tatbert, who up to this day hath been my inseparable companion, prior of this monastery of Ripon, to hold my place so long as I shall live. I have made all these appointments that the archangel Michael, when he visiteth me, may find me prepared ; for many tokens of my death haunt me now.” Then the great bell of the convent sounded, and all the monks of Ripon entered the chapter, and the lord abbot went in to them, the feeble old man leaning on his crosier : but he could not stand to speak ; therefore he sat down and addressed his beloved family : “Our most reverend brother Celin has long labored in the Lord, as prior, for our

due observance ; and now will I no longer deny his wish to return to his old conversation in desert places, and to follow, as heretofore, the contemplative life for the which he thirsteth. But I admonish you, brethren, to continue the regular institute of your lives, until it please God that I come again among you : for now these two abbots, Tibba and Æbba, are come from Kenred, king of the Mercians, inviting me to confer with him, and the state of our monasteries in those parts induces me to go : and the king promises to dispose his entire life as I shall advise ; but, God willing, I will return to you again. If, however, as my frequent infirmities give me reason to expect, anything else befall me, remember, that whomsoever these witnesses, sitting here, Tibba and Æbba abbots, Tatbert and Hadufrid priests, and Alufrid master, shall bring from me, ye shall constitute your abbot, and pay to him the same obedience ye have vowed to God and to me." Then the monks fell upon their knees, and they bowed their heads to the very ground, and wept bitterly ; and as they wept, they promised obedience in broken words and all the brotherhood in chapter fell prostrate on the earth, and the old lord abbot blessed them, and commended them to the Lord, and then he went his way, and they saw his face no more.

Then eighteen months rolled away ; and Wilfrid went about visiting and settling his many monasteries ; and even if we knew of them, it would not be well to relate the sorrowful chapters wherein he presided, valediction after valediction, a mere melancholy chronicle of farewells ; for, indeed, it would be too harrowing. By this time we have come to love that young boy Wilfrid that left his home, a child of thirteen, in full armour, as a mimic knight,—we have come to love

him for the good Saxon heart that was in him : he has done battle, like a valiant soldier that he was, for our holy mother the Church ; he has fought with the great world, and beaten it, O how manfully and thoroughly ! and we dare not wholly love the feeble, stooping abbot ; we dare not wholly love him because of the marvellous gifts that are in him, which call for reverence, and, at least, a humbler love. And like a good Saxon prince, too, did Kenred redeem his promise of putting his life at Wilfrid's disposal : for he and Offa, two kings, left the world, and went to Rome, and there received St. Peter's crown in the tonsure of humble monks.

Now our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God, appeared to bishop Egwin of Worcester in some fields by Evesham ; and the bishop built an abbey there, and the monk-kings, Kenred and Offa, endowed it richly, and pope Constantine exempted it from all exactions, "to the end that the monks serving God there, according to the Rule of St. Benedict, might pass their lives in quietness, without any disturbance :" and Egwin went to Rome with the two kings, and the pope sat in the Lательan church, and the charter of Evesham was laid before him, and the pontiff confirmed it with a ready mind. And the Register of Evesham says, "Pope Constantine being a witness of these kings' munificence, and having been informed of the wonderfully gracious visitation by which our Blessed Lady had vouchsafed to dignify the province of the Mercians, admonished the holy archbishop Bertwald to publish the great wonders of our Lord ; and for that purpose to assemble a synod of the whole kingdom, in which he should in the name of the said pope denunciate to all princes, nobles, bishops, and other ecclesiastics the confirmation which he had given to the endowments of the said monastery made by

the said kings, together with many privileges and exemptions by himself bestowed upon it, to the end, saith he, that there should be restored a congregation of monks, who should incessantly serve our Lord according to the Rule of the glorious St. Benedict, which institute as yet is rarely observed in those parts.⁶ Moreover, he enjoined him and his successors, with the assent of Egwin, bishop of that diocese, to take into their care and protection the said monastery, and in case any tyrants or oppressors should invade the rights or possessions of it, to smite them with the rod of excommunication." In truth, but a little land would have made the Evesham Benedictines rich, for the tower of St. Lawrence looks over a very Eden of fertility. So when St. Bertwald received the pope's letter he convened a synod at Alncester, on the Alne, seven miles from Evesham, where the kings of Mercia had a goodly palace; and there the primate published the matter, and the pope's charter and the royal grants were read; and very touchingly, as to the man who had introduced the Benedictine Rule into Mercia, the archbishop turned to Wilfrid, and imposed on the old man the honorable duty of consecrating the new abbey. This was the last public act of Wilfrid's life; it was the act of a bishop. We mentioned before the reconciliation of St. Theodore and himself, then that holy communion by the Nid, and now the last thing we have to tell bespeaks kindliness, peaceable thoughts, and befitting honor between St. Bertwald and himself. Whatever came of other men, Saints could not well help understanding Wilfrid at the last.

For quiet pastoral beauty the Nen is a sweet river, winding like a serpent, not in the romantic prison of a

⁶ Worcestershire lay out of the line of Wilfrid's monasteries.

narrow woody vale, but claiming as its own a region of blythe green meadows, multitudinous churches, and full often fringes of deepest summer foliage, varying its usual border of wide sheep-spotted fields. The frowning front of Peterborough Minster looks up this smiling valley ; and to one who wanders up the stream, turning his back on the abbey, the spires of Fletton and of Stanground, and the little tower of Woodstone, many a sweet sight presents itself. When the woods of Milton give way to the hedgeless fields, the “mother church” of Caistor, where St. Kyneburga dwelt, is seen, and the churches of Water Newton, Stibbington, and Wansford come to the river’s brink ; then the low tower of Yarwell succeeds, and the beautiful spire of Nassington, hiding itself amid the poplars it so much resembles ; while through the whole reach, a beacon never missing, the tall and lordly tower of Elton on its hill-top shoots up out of the bosom of princely woods, looking down on the octagon of Fotheringay, where Queen Mary laid “her tired head upon the block ;” there to the left the interesting church of Warmington stands a little retired from the stream, while Cotterstock and Tansor stand opposite each other on the shore : and as Peterborough Minster looks up this quiet valley, so down it visible for many a mile, the fretted spire of Oundle, shooting up into the blue sky, looks like a sentinel, from every point a beautiful, indeed an exquisite thing for the eye to rest upon. Over this region, Wilfrid’s spirit once rested, and hither did he come to die ; the gates of his⁷ monastery of Oundle,

⁷ Bishop Patrick, and all the Peterborough antiquaries, stoutly maintain that this monastery did not belong to Wilfrid, but was a cell of Medehampstede. The truth is probably stated by Smith :—Petroburgenses aiunt hoc monasterium Undalense semper ad se pertinuisse, nec fuisse unquam Wilfridi monasterium, sed Eddius et ex eo Beda

or Avondale, closed upon the care-broken abbot ; and they opened for his holy body to be borne in funeral pomp to Ripon.

There, in the peaceful seclusion of Oundle, St. Michael's visit came to the aged abbot. He spoke a few words to the brotherhood, but not many, for he was very weak. As he rode to Oundle (*equitantibus illis per viam*) he had felt the approaches of death, and he made a general confession of his whole life to Tatbert : then he summed up and named all the lands belonging to the different monasteries, and appointed St. Acca over Hexham : all this was done on horseback ; so when he entered the monastery he had nothing left to do, but to give the monks his benediction, and to die. He lay upon his bed silent and almost motionless ; night and day the chanting never ceased around, though the monks had much ado to chant, so bitterly they wept. Still the solemn chant went on, and the brethren came to the 103rd psalm, and sweetly still and solemnly they sang the words, *Emitte spiritum tuum, et creabuntur, et renovabis faciem terræ* ; and the words stirred within the abbot's soul, and the emotion tranquilly dislodged his lingering life. On his pillow lay a wicker box with the Lord's Body in it, and a glass vial with the Most Precious Blood ;⁸ he turned his head gently on his cheek, and without a groan or even an audible sigh, he gave back his spirit to Almighty God. "In the hour of his expiration there was heard a sweet melody of birds, and clapping of their wings, as if they were flying up to Heaven, but not one bird could

aliter. Galeus conjicit primo fuisse Wilfridi, postea ad Petroburgenses spectasse. *Not. in Bed.*

⁸ *Vimineo condens Corpus Kyriale canistro,
Exhausit vitro vitalem digne cruorem.*

Carm. Fridegodi.

be seen : and the same thing happening several times during the solemn procession when his body was transported, certain devout and prudent persons then present interpreted it to be an assembly of Angels, which, according as had been promised him, were come to conduct his soul to Heaven.”⁹

Many were the Mercian abbots who thronged to the fair town of Oundle, when Wilfrid’s death was known, in order to do honor to his blessed body. One of them, named Bucula, took off his garment and spread it on the ground, and over it they pitched a tent, and on the abbot’s robe they laid St. Wilfrid’s body with gentle reverence. Then the clergy put on their vestments, and sang psalms ; and as they sang, they washed the Saint’s body; and ever as they paused in singing, they heard the bird-like melody and the wafture of unseen wings above them, and they wondered, and sang on, looking one upon another, and speaking not. Over the place where the washing took place, a little cell was built, and a wooden cross erected, and many were the miracles which afterwards the Lord wrought there for the sick folk of Northampton and of Huntingdon. There they wrapped the body in a winding-sheet, and laid it in a car, and bore it all the way to Ripon, chanting as they went ; and they thought of all the abbot’s life, his six and seventy years of toil and care, of hardness to himself and tender-heartedness to others ; and they thought of the six and forty years of his episcopate, and they tried to sum up all the priests and dea-

⁹ Some make the 12th of October the day of his death ; some the 24th of April ; the latter say Matthew Westminst. confounded the last translation of his relics at Canterbury with the day of his death at Oundle.

cons he had ordained, and the churches he had consecrated, and they could not, for the number was amazing. And so they went upon their way to Ripon, Tatbert, the new abbot, going with them ; and when they crossed the Ure, they laid the body in the church of St. Peter, which Wilfrid himself had consecrated. Moreover, abbot Tatbert sent one of Wilfrid's¹ vestments to the abbess Kynedrid, desiring her to wash it, for it was soiled with the feet of the attendants treading on it where it had trailed upon the ground : and an old nun, who had lost the use of her arm, had faith that the water wherein the vestment was washed would heal her; and either her faith, or the water, through the mercy of God, did so. Not long after, a band of exiled nobles went up the valley of the pastoral Nen, burning and pillaging for spite, and not through need ; and they saw far off, on the side of the mount, the monastery of Oundle, and they came and set fire to it ; but one part of the building would not burn ; it was the cell where Wilfrid died : they threw dry straw upon the flames, but the straw was bidden to forego its usual nature, and instead of kindling, it put out the fire. One of the most daring of the band, beholding the cell full of dry straw, went in to set it on fire ; but when he had entered, he beheld a young man in white with a golden cross in his hand, and the noble rushed out affrighted, saying, Let us depart, the angel of the Lord defends this cell. Now there was round the monastery at Oundle a great thorn hedge, and this had taken fire ; but when the flames approached from one direction St. Wilfrid's cell, and from the other the wooden cross

¹ *Syndonem suam*, says Eddius ; but the context shews the meaning given in the text to be the most probable.

where his body had been washed, they sank down like obedient things, and went out.² At |Ripon, too, were signs and wonders manifold. Upon St. Wilfrid's anniversary, when deep fear of the temporal powers overshadowed the minds of the abbots, because Wilfrid, their great shield, was taken away, while they were keeping the vigil inside the church, some monks out of doors beheld a miraculous ring of white light stretched round about the monastery. But even the sight of a miracle was not cause enough to infringe holy obedience : St. Benedict, in the forty-second chapter of his Rule, enjoins silence through the night after compline has been sung : but in the morning the monks told their brethren what vision had been vouchsafed to them, and the rest were sad because they had not been cheered by it as well. But in the evening of the feast, at compline time, the abbots and monks went out into the twilight, and again the marvellous cincture appeared, rising up out of the spot where the bishop's tomb was, and clasping in its luminous embrace the whole of his dear monastery ; it was rainbow-like, only without hues, but of pearly white : and the abbots and the monks understood how that the intercession of the Saints is the wall of the Divine help round about the vineyard of the Lord. Montes in circuitu ejus, et Dominus in circuitu populi sui, ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum. These marvels once found faith, and where they found faith, were they not very blissful consolations ? I do not say we *must* believe them, but they

² "As I rode through Oundle in April 1723, I saw there a very ancient chapel, now converted into a barn or workhouse, which I am persuaded by the great antiquity of its structure, belonged heretofore to that very monastery wherein Wilfrid, our founder, died." Peck. Hist. Stamford, ii. 46.

make me say, Magnus Dominus, et laudabilis nimis in civitate Dei nostri, in monte sancto ejus. Fundatur exultatione universæ terræ Mons Sion, latera aquilonis, civitas Regis magni.

Two hundred and fifty years St. Wilfrid's body lay at Ripon : but the ravages of the Danes were fearful there ; so, in 959, his relics were translated to Canterbury by St. Odo, who laid them under the high altar, and Lanfranc enshrined them : St. Anselm laid them at the north side of the altar ; they rest now hard by the bones of that gentle-mannered and meek-hearted prelate, Reginald Pole, the last primate of Catholic England. *Si conversi in corde suo, in terra ad quam captivi ducti fuerant, egerint poenitentiam, et deprecati Te fuerint in terra captivitatis suæ, dicentes : Peccavimus, inique fecimus, injuste egimus ; et reversi fuerint ad Te in toto corde suo, et in tota anima sua, in terra captivitatis suæ ad quam ducti sunt, adorabunt Te contra viam terræ suæ quam dedisti patribus eorum, et urbis quam elegisti, et domus quam ædificavi nomini Tuo : Tu exaudies de caelo, hoc est, de firme habitaculo Tuo, preces eorum, et facias judicium, et dimittas populo Tuo, quamvis peccatori.*

We have now traced St. Wilfrid's course through all his weary and perplexing strifes : let us add a word or two upon his life. It was one of the deep, yet startling sayings of De Rancé, that a Christian ought to buy enemies, and that their worth was their weight in gold ;³ and if such be their value in the work of sanctification, how amply was Wilfrid provided with that discipline ! Yet his making so many enemies, and those so often Saints, may require a little explanation. We do not at all

³ Un Chrétien devrait acheter des ennemis au poids de l'or.

mean to say that Wilfrid may not have received, in humbling compensation for his great gifts, an irritability of temper, and something of an unamiable pertinacity ; it may have been so. But, without any such supposition, the place he filled, and the work he did, do of themselves sufficiently account for this painful phenomenon in his biography. True it was, that St. Theodore had to retrieve the honor of Rome in the south, just as Wilfrid had to do so in the north. But Theodore had only to confront remissness, dissoluteness, and the like, in reforming which he had a strong public opinion going along with him ; whereas Wilfrid stood in the face of a strict and holy, albeit uncatholic, system, whose Saints had been the honored missionaries and bishops of Northumberland. In men's eyes he was experimentalizing ; he was breaking down that which had obviously much good about it. Moderate men would not know what to think, what to make of his work : they could not tell where it would end ; so their impulse would be to hold back, and in holding back they would get frightened. Wilfrid made no secret at all of what his work was ; it was the thorough romanizing of the Northumbrian Church ; and there is really something so very awful about Rome, either for good or ill, that we cannot wonder at men becoming timorous, when the harder zeal of others drags them reluctantly into the presence of such an exciting change. All this, of course, was against Wilfrid. Then, again, when a church is not in a pure state, which the Northumbrian Church of those days was not, for it was corrupted with erastianism, she distrusts the zeal of her own sons : she has not the heart to embrace a magnificent purpose ; while, at the same time, there is not the courage in her to crush it at once ; so that her

opposition, so to speak, works sideways ; and though it looks merely undignified to a spectator, it, nevertheless, enthrals for a time activity and zeal, and the repression is of course painful even to the most undaunted. All this, too, was against Wilfrid. Yet he fought his way through it, as men in such cases always must, by personal suffering, helped not a little by his true Yorkshire cheerfulness. But it may be said that he failed, for in the end he gave up his bishopric. The Saints never fail, yet they ever seem to fail. They fight for a principle, and that principle is embodied in certain ends ; and God's will is, that those ends should ever give way and break under them, lest they should rest in the end, forget the principle, cry victory too soon, and leave a *Divine End* incomplete. He fought for Rome ; he pledged himself in youth to Rome ; he did in public life what St. Benedict Biscop did in literature and private life, spread Roman influences ; Rome came to him in a shape he did not expect, in sufferings ; and sufferings providentially led to appeals, and appeals to fear of Rome ; he fought, not for York, but for Rome ; and so he left York where he did not find it, chained to St. Peter's chair : this was his work, divined so early as his boyish studies in the library of Lindisfarne ; and when he died at Oundle, was one tittle of it left undone ?

Eadhed has now a successor. After the lapse of so many centuries, a second bishop sits on the throne of Ripon. And is there no trace of the abbot Wilfrid ? Yes—the townsmen of his conventional city know one Sunday in the year by the name of Wilfrid Sunday. How melancholy ! a name, not a thing, a shadow with not enough of cognizable substance to be reproachful to those who play with it. Miserable indeed ! the

faith that Wilfrid lives and intercedes, is it widely spread in Ripon ? The truths that he taught, are they acknowledged there ? The unity for which he sacrificed himself, is it prized there ? Wilfrid Sunday ! what do men mean, when they call the thousand and one vestiges of better times, visible in England, lingering relics of catholicism ? What lingers in them or about them ? What truth, what helpfulness, what holiness ? If they be relics, where is their virtue ? Whom have they healed ? What have they wrought ? When will people understand how unreal all such language is ? Poetry is not catholicism, though catholicism is deeply and essentially poetical ; and when a thing has become beautiful in the eyes of an antiquary it has ceased to be useful : its beauty consists in its being something which men cannot work with. A broken choir in a woody dell,—if it be sweet to the eyes, and not bitter in the thoughts,—if it soothes, but humbles not, what is it but a mischievous thing over which it were well to invoke a railroad, or any other devastating change. Let us be men, and not dreamers : one cannot dream in religion without profaning it. When men strive about the decorations of the altar, and the lights, and the rood-screen, and the credence, and the piscina, and the sedilia, and the postures here and the postures there, and the people are not first diligently instructed in the holy mysteries, or brought to realize the Presence and the Sacrifice, no less than the commemorative Sacrament,—what is it all but puerility, raised into the wretched dignity of profaneness by the awfulness of the subject-matter ? Is there not already very visible mischief in the architectural pedantry displayed here and there, and the grotesque earnestness about pretty trivialities, and the stupid reverence for

the *formal* past? Altars are the playthings of nineteenth century societies, and we are taught that the Church cannot change, modify, or amplify her worship : she is, so we learn, a thing of a past century, not a life of all centuries ; and there is abusive wrangling and peevish sarcasm, while men are striving to force some favorite antiquated clothing of their own over the majestic figure of true, solid, abiding catholicism. It is downright wickedness to be going thus *a-mumming* (a buffoonery, doubtless correct enough out of some mediæval costume-book,) when we should be doing plain work for our age, and our neighbours. But *sentiment* is easier than *action*, and an embroidered frontal a prettier thing than an ill-furnished house and a spare table, yet, after all, it is not so striking: and a wan face gives more force to a sacred rite, than an accurately clipped stole, or a handsomely swelling chasuble. The world was once taught by a holy man that there was nothing merely external in Christianity ; the value of its forms consists in their being the truthful expressions of inwardly existing convictions ; and what convictions of the English poor, who come unconfessed to the Blessed Sacrifice, does all this modern ancientness of vestment and adorning express ? Children are fond of *playing at funerals* ; it is touching to see nature's fears so working at that innocent age : whereas to see grown-up children, book in hand, *playing at mass*, putting ornament before truth, suffocating the inward by the outward, bewildering the poor instead of leading them, revelling in catholic sentiment instead of offering the acceptable sacrifice of hardship and austerity, —this is a fearful, indeed a sickening development of the peculiar iniquity of the times, a master-piece of Satan's craft. This is not the way to become Catholic

again ; it is only a profaner kind of Protestantism than any we have seen hitherto. Austerity is the mother of beauty: only so is beauty legitimately born. A hard life—that is the impressive thing, when its secrets escape here and there, at this time and at that time, as they are sure to do, however humble and given to concealment the penitent may be. A gentle yet manly inroad into modern effeminacies, simplicity of furniture, plainness of living, largeness of alms, a mingling with the poor, something of monastic discipline in households, the self-denying observance of seasons, somewhat of seclusion, silence, and spiritual retreat :—these should come first. When they have wrought their proper miracles, then will come the beauty and the poetry of catholic ages ; and that will be soon enough for them to come. It sounds poetical when we hear of the Saint's sackcloth beneath his regal or pontifical attire : do we find it hard to be fully possessed with catholic truth when we worship in a square chapel, with sashwindows and a plastered ceiling ? If it be so, what manner of catholics are we ? Verily not such as wore sackcloth in times of old, and went bravely through trouble confessing Christ. While the regulated fast, and the morning meditation, and the systematic examination of conscience are irksome restraints, under which men fret and grow restive ; it is dangerous, indeed, that they should be indulging in the gorgeous chancel and the dim aisle, the storied window and the chequered floor, or even the subdued and helpful excitement of the holy chant. Let us not travel too quickly on this road, though it be a very good road to be travelling, so long as it runs parallel with improved practice,—or rather some little behind it, so as to be safer for self-regulated penitents, which most of us seem wilfully determined

to remain. And there is yet another more excellent way of advancing the catholic cause, which the young would do well to look to who require some field for their zeal, and are turning it into the poetry of religion. What poetry more sweet, and yet withal more awfully real—indeed, hourly realized by the sensible cuttings of the very Cross—than the pursuit of Holy Virginity ? What is the building of a cathedral to the consecration of a living body ? What is the sacrifice of money to the oblation of an undivided heart ? What are the troubles and the pains of life to the struggles of the sealed affections, struggles which come never to the surface, plaints which have no audience, sorrows which cannot ask for sympathy, and haply joys of which it is but a weak thing to say that they are not fathomable ? What, O young men and maidens ! what is more like an actual, protracted, life-long Crucifixion, than the preservation of Holy Virginity, while every action of your gentle lives sings, like our sweet Lady, a perpetual Magnificat ?

Reader ! this strife of synods, these reigns of kings, this perplexity of dates,—has it tried your kind patience, and out of the bewildering weariness of the dry crowded narrative, do you find it hard to put before your mind's eye what sort of a man St. Wilfrid was ? I think you have learned to love him for all the dryness of his story, and if to love him, then I am sure you have learned so to have him in your thoughts, that you would know him again amid a multitude of Saints, and pick him out of the crowd as none other than veritable Wilfrid. Yes—you can see him, a “quick walker,” with “never a sour face,” yet withal a man given to read dry books, such as ecclesiastical canons ; just as when you read Clarendon, you can see poor bishop

Wren of Norwich, though all you are told is, that he “was a crabbed man, well-versed in Greek liturgies.” Eddi tells us that St. Wilfrid’s special devotions were to St. Peter and St. Andrew ; and this tells us much ; for his honor of St. Peter symbolizes his great purpose, and his love of St. Andrew reveals a meditative gentleness, never forgetful of the prayer answered in his youth in the oratory at Rome. You can see the young bishop riding about Yorkshire, with his church-masons at his heels, and his precentor at his side. And then—with what deeply grateful reverence should we not sum up such a score of deeds for us unworthy Englishmen !—the trainer of St. Acca, the educator of the northern nobles, the tutor of St. Willebrord, the converter of Cedwalla, the confessor of St. Etheldreda, the adviser of St. Ethelred, the consecrator of St. Swibert, the converter of the men of Friesland and of Sussex, the finisher of the conversion of England, the restorer of catholic uniformity, the introducer of the Benedictine Rule into the north—one man was all these things, so mightily wrought the grace of God ! and that one man, cheerful and fresh-hearted ever, was a fair and beautiful Saxon youth, who stood erewhile at Chalons on the Saone, bound and stripped for death, and, through God’s loving-kindness to our dear country, missed, yet hardly missed, the crown of martyrdom.

THE END:

LONDON :

Printed by S. & J. BENTLEY, WILSON, and FLEMY,
Bancr House, Shoe Lane.

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